The THIRTEENTH COMMANDMENT

RUPERT HUGHES

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THE THIRTEENTH COMMANDMENT

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RUPERT HUGHES

THE THIRTEENTH COMMANDMENT
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[See p. 313

"I COULDN'T help hearing what you were saying. You needn't be downhearted, though, for I've just thought of a way to help daddy out."

THE THIRTEENTH COMMANDMENT

A NOVEL

BY

RUPERT HUGHES

AUTHOR OF

What Will People Say?

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY

JAMES MONTGOMERY FLAGG



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FROM THE DEPTHS

OF

GRATITUDE AND DEVOTION

TO

RAY LONG

ILLUSTRATIONS

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CHAPTER I

AS usual, nowadays, instead of knocking at the door, Fate called up on the telephone.

Though the bell shrilled almost in Mrs. Kip's ear, she would not answer it. She winced, shook her head, agitated her rocking-chair with petulance, embroidered vindictively, and hardly so much called out as sighed very loudly toward the hallway.

"Daphne! O-oh, Daphne! the telephone again!"

The telephone was usually for Daphne again.

From somewhere aloft came a seraphic answer: "I hear it! I'm coming!"

On the stairs there sounded a muffled scurry like the rush of an April shower chased down a hillside by the sun. An allegory of April darted across the room and raised the telephone to her lips as if it were a beaker of good cheer. She had not the faintest idea who was at the other end of the line, but her character and her mood were revealed in the cordiality of her glad "Hello!"

It was Youth in the spring crying out Hello to the world.

Her mother was used to this humor of Daphne's, and paid no heed till a sudden frost chilled the warm tone of the girl's voice. The smile of hospitality wasted on the telephone had given place to a look of embarrassment.

Mrs. Kip whispered, anxiously, "Who is it?"

Daphne motioned her not to interrupt, and her voice grew deep and important. It became what her brother Bayard called her "reception voice." In her grandest contralto she said:

"This is Miss Kip. Yes, I have. Yes, he does. I beg pardon? Oh?—Oh! Oh!! How do you do, Mr. Wmbwm."

"Mr. Who?" her mother keened. Daphne frowned her down and listened violently, breaking in now and then with a maddening inconsequence:

"Oh, he did! You don't mean it! Fine! Disgusting! Splendid! Not at all! Indeed, yes! Oh, I'm so sorry! Delighted! I couldn't think of it! By all means!"

This was interspersed with assorted giggles, sighs, polite poutings, and increasingly friendly smiles. Harrowed by her curiosity, Mrs. Kip hung with her rocker poised on its tiptoes, and nagged at her daughter:

"Who is it? What is it? Why don't you tell me?"

Daphne whispered to quiet her, "A young man from New York—friend of Bayard's—same office. I haven't got his name yet."

Into the telephone she was saying, and bowing and nodding the while with her politest face, "Indeed I'll try to be. Of course Cleveland's not New York, but— By the way, do you dance? That's good. That's right; might as well be dead if you don't! How long will you be in Cleveland? Oh, is that all? Well, then, you must come out here and have tea with us this very afternoon."

At that Mrs. Kip went backward till the rocking-chair stood on its hind legs. Tea was not quotidian in her household. Tea was a party. She wigwagged negatives to Daphne, but Daphne perfected her invitation blandly:

"Mother says you just must. She's so anxious to hear about Bayard. He's one of those awfully loving sons that never write or come home. No, no, don't try to take a cab; it costs a fortune. But the trolley takes a week. I'll call for you at the hotel in my little car. No, it's not

one of those; it's an electric. I run it myself. Afraid to risk it? Brave man! I'll be there in fifteen minutes, and you might be on the steps. Good-by, Mr. Wmbwm."

This last was said in the fond tone of ancient friendship, and she hung up the receiver with a gesture like shaking hands.

She turned to find her mother thinning her lips in a long tight line; her cheeks bulged explosively. Daphne forestalled her:

"He's a young fellow in the same firm as Bayard. Says he's here on business for ten days. Bayard told him to call me up and tell me to be nice to him. That sounds like By. Also said he hadn't time to write. That sounds liker still. He says—Mr. What's-his-name says—that By said his fraternity pin would serve as letter of introduction. Same 'frat' as By; so of course I had to invite him out to tea. I couldn't get his name quite—something like—well, I don't know. Bayard told him to kiss you for him, so he must be all right. I was going to take him to the hotel to a tea-dance, but I thought I'd better give him a look-over first. So I'll roll him out here. Looks better, I suppose, too, to trot out parents and teacups first. If he's all right, I'll have time to get him back to the hotel for a dance. If he isn't, I've got other engagements. Have tea ready. Get out the nice china, and the napkins I monogrammed, and—"

"But we can't have tea. It's Maria's afternoon off, and there's only the cook."

"Well, you tell that Swedish dromedary to put on a clean apron, and not to say, 'Huh!'"

"But, Daphne! Wait! I can't—"

"I haven't time to argue with you, mamma. Please do as I tell you for once, and don't fuss. Mr. Wmbwm will probably have a lot of news to tell you about your prodigal son. G'by!"

She popped a kiss on the forehead that anxiety had turned to corduroy, and ran up-stairs like another April

shower chasing the sun up-hill. She dashed down again with hat and gloves, and with nose repowdered, slammed the front door gaily, thrummed the steps, and strode across the long lawn to the little electric car standing under the *porte-cochère*. The car was very large for a beetle, but pretty small for an automobile.

It did not start at once, and Daphne fretted at the lever, said "Darn it!" and jiggled everything in sight for luck, like a Swiss bell-ringer. She was finally rewarded by the gradual decision of the thing to move.

Then she smiled again and purred along her way down the eminent wooded lane of Euclid Avenue, where the young summer was festooning all the smoky elms with green bunting. The young lady errant was riding forth to joust with love and adventure in the manner of her time.

CHAPTER II

FOREIGNERS have commented on the enthusiasm with which a stranger bearing a letter of introduction to Americans is swept into the family life and accepted as a kinsman for whose comfort one is responsible.

Clay Wimburn was not a foreigner, but he had spent a good many of his years in foreign countries. He had never visited such a combination of big city and big village as Cleveland. He had come on business for his firm to get estimates and bids on the manufacture of an automatic stoker for locomotives.

The night train from New York had deposited him in the grimy cavern of the station at an early hour. He had dawdled over his breakfast, feeling lost without his New York morning papers. He had wandered a little, noting with surprise that Cleveland had been rebuilding itself about an artistic Brunnerian idea.

When at last it grew late enough to telephone for an appointment with the man he had come to see, he was disgusted to learn that the wretch would not be visible till the next day.

It was then that Bayard Kip's parting behest to call up his sister recurred to Wimburn. He planned to compose a formal note of self-introduction, but Bayard had forgotten to tell him his sister's name or his father's initials. There were several Kips in the telephone-book, and he could not tell which would be which. He decided to call up each number and ask a maid or somebody if Mr. Bayard Kip's people lived there.

The very first number he called brought Daphne her-

self suddenly voice to voice with him. Voices are characters, and it was a case of love at first hearing with him. She had him smiling and cooing at the second phrase. He felt that she was going to make his stay in Cleveland pleasant.

He formed all sorts of pictures of her while he waited on the hotel steps, but when she stepped out of her car and looked about, she was none of the Misses Kip he had planned. He did not start forward at her till she made a timid feint at him. She was a round, pretty little thing, amiable of eye and humorous about the lips, and cunningly dressed. She looked as if she would play a good game of tennis. She looked as if she would be a plucky, tireless sportswoman; yet she had a wistful, tender huggableness that a girl ought not to lose, however well she plays tennis.

Daphne had had time to repent of her boldness and to feel shy and afraid. But when Daphne was shy and afraid she always swaggered. She swaggered as dangerously as a wren on a spray of apple blossoms.

"Is this Mr.—" she began. He was too nervous to notice her pause.

He retorted, "Is this Miss Kip?"

He noted that she shook hands well, with a boyish clench accompanied by an odd little duck of the head.

"Mighty nice of you to take me off this desert island," he beamed.

"Mighty glad to have the privilege," she said as she verified the fraternity pin on his waistcoat. "Mother is dying to hear how Bayard is."

Mothers have little power left as guardians, but the children find that the title has a certain value at times in keeping order.

"Won't you get in?" said Daphne, pointing to her car. She made him crowd in first, then followed and closed the door and pulled the throttle.

After they left the traffic-hampered streets she asked





ALREADY Wimburn was a member of the household care whether the house were artistic or not, or th



he had been kissed and sympathized with. He did not people rich or poor.



the inevitable question: "Ever seen Euclid Avenue before?"

"No, I haven't."

"We're rather proud of it—prouder still of what it used to be, before the shops began to crawl up. It used to be beautiful."

"It's beautiful now," said Wimburn. "Cleveland reminds me of Florence."

"Florence! I spent a day or two there with a gang of school-girls on a tour. I thought Florence was about as different from Cleveland as could be."

"That's why they remind me of each other," Wimburn explained. "Everything in Florence was mysterious and walled in and hidden; everything in Cleveland is so open and honest and aboveboard."

"Perhaps not everything," said Daphne. "We're not quite so dull as all that comes to!" She was almost hopeless of finding out his name.

He meditated aloud: "How wonderful it really is that you should talk to me over the telephone and invite me to your home and come and get me like this."

"What's so wonderful about that?" said Daphne. "Everybody does it."

"Everything that everybody does is wonderful," said Wimburn. "But how especially wonderful it is to live in a city where there are no walls about the gardens. Look! there aren't even fences. The lawns are all joined together and the houses are mostly windows. Everything is so open and free, full of sunlight and frankness. You're taking me home in this charming little glass showcase to introduce me to your mother. I tell you the world do move! A woman of to-day has a lot to be thankful for. You ought to be mighty happy."

"*Ought-to-be* hasn't much to do with *Is*," Daphne sighed. "We've got a lot to get yet—and a lot to get rid of."

He sank back discouraged. The sex was still insatiable.

When you go visiting a home you have never seen and are met at the train by your host or hostess you cannot help trying to decide which house in the double line you pass in review is to be your lodging. And in that decision is an involuntary estimate of your host or hostess.

"That couldn't be theirs!" you whisper inside you at intervals. "I hope that's it! I wish that could have been it. Oh, I'm afraid that's it! Yes, it is. Ugh! the ugliest house on the ugliest street! Of course! It would be my luck! And it looks just like 'em!" Then aloud: "And is this really your home? Isn't it stunning!"

Stunning is a very useful word, a two-faced word, with which you can lie and keep a pious conscience—a recommendable word.

Host says, "Do you really like it?"

And you exclaim: "Like it? That's not the word at all."

If you are a disgustingly honorable person such an ambiguity is the limit of your generosity, but if you have any human decency and are worthy of hospitality you go on and say: "I love it! It's ideal." If it is quite gaudy you call it a "palace"; if it is plain and stupid you say it is "so homelike"!

Clay Wimburn was now engaged in this fascinating branch of biology: the study of a new character through conversation, clothes, lodging.

He was wondering what sort of home Daphne Kip could have grown up in. He knew her brother in New York, but it is hard to tell about a man abroad. The sloven and the fop may come from the same manor; from a tenement will issue two brothers, one of them a stevedore, the other a haberdasher.

Middle-aged women tend to subside to their own level, but young women over-play their origins, over-dress their statuses. The princess sailing down the channel in full rigging may be a shop-girl and the Quaker girl may be the daughter of a millionaire. Wimburn was eager to know what Daphne was, and whence.

Daphne owned a car, but many a person owned a car who owned little else. Cars were the fever of a generation on wheels.

Wimburn was trying to select Daphne's home from the assortment. On one side of Euclid Avenue the lawns were deep and wide. To a New-Yorker they were priceless beautiful. Yet on the other side the yards were too vast to be called lawns—they were farmsteads.

On either side the homes ranged widely from old-fashioned residences to new-fangled châteaux. Wimburn could not make up his mind as to Daphne's residential probabilities. At length she said:

"See that big house on the left? That's my home."

He stared at it in some astonishment. It was as big as a castle. The thick walls seemed to be meant to withstand siege and the hard knocks of culverin and battering-ram. Only the moat and drawbridge were lacking, and the mountain scenery.

Wimburn thought it strange that such a little wren as Daphne should nest in such a stronghold. Evidently she was more important than he had thought.

"It's gorgeous!" he exclaimed, and sat up a little straighter.

Opposite the entrance Daphne turned her car, and Wimburn began to prepare formal phrases of greeting for her mother, who would be at least an empress. This visit was an event. He would receive distinction from it.

But instead of driving in Daphne completed the circle and turned off Euclid Avenue into a side street. She chuckled maliciously at Wimburn's chagrin. "I was only joking. My father used to be the gardener there."

"I know better than that," said Wimburn. "He manufactures the adding-machines we use in our office—'Kip's Kalkulator'—with three k's."

On this side street the homes were close to one another and the street. And they were frame houses of the jig-saw, curlicue, shingle-spasm school. Most of them

were newish relics of a recent real-estate "improvement" boom.

"This is our street," said Daphne, "and that's really our house. That's mother pulling the dandelions."

She pointed to a cottage that was old without being respectable, evidently the most ancient dwelling in the region, a shanty left over from earlier days and swamped in the tide of prosperity.

On the patch of ill-kempt grass a scrawny woman stood up-ended, with her head hanging down almost between her knees, her hands gathering "greens" for salad. She held the most awkward attitude of which the human form is capable — the attitude well chosen to scare wolves away.

Wimburn felt queasy and hastily changed his formulas of greeting. He would lose, instead of gain, distinction by this visit. He tried to solace himself with reminders that, after all, this is a democracy, "be it ever so humble," and things of that sort.

But once more Daphne laughed and passed on, leaving him befuddled. She turned into another avenue, and this was betwixt and between, half-way from both poverty and wealth.

Wimburn berated himself for feeling that it mattered much where or how this nice girl lived; but he was all mixed up. The ingredients of his soul had been shuffled together. It is one of the most joyous prerogatives of the weaker sex to revert the stronger to chaos. Daphne was tickled with her success.

"Well shaken before taken" was evidently her motto. There was philosophy in her flippancy. She was studying him while he studied her.

Finally she took pity on him and turned into a driveway leading through a spacious expanse of grass dotted with trees and shrubs, to a homelike house without beauty or ugliness—a house that had grown with the personalities of the occupants. The only ostentations about the place

were the cupola of an earlier day and the *porte-cochère* stuck out like a broken wing.

The house was no more a matter for artistic consideration than a pair of old shoes. Daphne stepped out and helped Wimburn to alight as if he were an elderly invalid. She paused a moment on the porch to startle him by expressing just what he was thinking:

"The trees and grass are nice, however."

She laughed as she saw how he squirmed before her intuition. Then she led him into the house and waved him toward the hall-tree. When he had set down his hat and stick she led him into the drawing-room.

"Mother, we're home."

"Yes, dear," said Mrs. Kip, who called Daphne "dear" before company. She was looking slightly dressed up and her eyebrows were lifted in the well-bred line of patient inquiry usual to hostesses.

"Mother," said Daphne, "I want to present Mr.—" (mumble—gulp). She had not yet achieved his name.

Her mother shocked her by saying, "Delighted to meet you, Mr.— I didn't quite catch the name."

Mrs. Kip could not talk to anonymous persons. She simply had to punctuate her remarks with the name of the addressee. It filled the breathing-places and thought-gaps and prevented the adversary in conversation from breaking in.

Daphne blushed for her mother's query, but was glad to overhear the stranger's answer:

"I am Mr. Wimburn, Mrs. Kip—Clay Wimburn."

At this moment a tall, shambling man walked in. He looked as if he looked older than he was. His spectacles overwhelmed a rather unsuccessful nose. Daphne hardly needed to introduce him as her father. She gave Wimburn a name now, and he felt called upon to explain his incursion.

"I know your son Bayard very well. I'm in his office. We belong to the same fraternity—different chapters, of

course. We struck up a great friendship. When he knew I was coming to Cleveland he said, 'Tell my sister to be nice to you,' and—and—"

Wimburn paused in some embarrassment before the ball-room manner of Mrs. Kip. But the pompous disguises of timidity fell from her as she murmured—and blushed in a motherly way:

"Daphne told me. He said for you to kiss his mother for him."

"Ye-es."

"Well, I am his mother."

"Oh! May I?"

"Will you?"

He pressed his lips respectfully on her cheek, but she, closing her eyes to imagine him her son, flung her fat arms about him and held him a moment. He kissed her again with a kind of vicarious devotion. Her cheek was salt-wet under his second kiss, and she fell back, beating her eyelids and laughing sobbishly.

"I'd want Bayard to deliver such a message to your mother," she explained.

"My mother!" he groaned as his eyes went up and his jaws set hard.

Mrs. Kip caught his hands and squeezed them and said: "Oh, that's too bad, you poor boy! Was it long ago?"

"Three years."

"Oh, that's too bad!" It was not much to say. But what is there to say?

Already Wimburn was a member of the household; he had been kissed and sympathized with. He did not care whether the house were artistic or not, or the people rich or poor.

He turned to Daphne with an apologetic look, and saw that she was staring at him with softer eyes than he had thought she had.

Definite anxieties engaged Mrs. Kip, for tea had come

in tottering on a tray carried by a panic-smitten cook, as agile as a hippopotamus and as shy as a violet.

The tray reached the table with a jolt as from a great height. The cook disguised as a maid had forgotten most of the minor details, such as the sugar, the lemon, and the tea.

Daphne apologized as the wretch went galumphing off for them: "The parlor-maid is out." Then she blushed with rage. She felt both that she ought not to have apologized and that the guest did not believe they had a parlor-maid.

Daphne and her mother and father went through the tea ceremony with the anxiety of people in an earthquake, and the "Swedish dromedary" stared at the unaccustomed sight as if the tea-bibbers were drinking poison, and she watching for the convulsions to begin.

But there were no casualties. Daphne and her mother breathed with regularity again, and Mrs. Kip asked questions in an endless series like an attorney. Mr. Kip put in an occasional query about Bayard's business prospects.

Clay Wimburn talked altogether about Bayard and his wonderful progress in business in spite of the hard times. Bayard, he said, was sticking to his desk like a demon, and he let nothing distract him.

"It must be glorious to live in New York," Daphne sighed.

"Why don't you come and pay Bayard a visit?" Wimburn suggested.

"He wouldn't have time to take me anywhere. And I don't know anybody else there."

"You know me. And I'd be only too glad to try to repay your hospitality to me."

"You wouldn't have much to repay!" said Daphne, fishingly.

"More than I ever possibly could," Wimburn hyperbolized.

Mrs. Kip looked on and listened with the fond alarm of

one who has seen fatal courtships begun with just such fencing.

When at length Daphne suggested that there was still time to rush down to the Hotel Statler for a dance or two, Mrs. Kip smiled at her. Wimburn did not know that he had been brought home on approval. Mrs. Kip realized that he was not to be returned as impossible. Her fancy gambled in futures.

CHAPTER III

ONCE more Wimburn was passenger in Daphne's car. The air was dulcet with the spring twilight, and his silence and hers made now a kind of communion of contentment.

They went up to the ball-room and stepped at once into another world. To Wimburn it was like crossing a door-sill from Cleveland to New York.

The typical *thé dansant* of the period was in full swing. The room was crowded, and the air was shaken with boisterous music and the whirling of linked bodies. Daphne attached herself to Wimburn's frame, and the music like a strong wind took them flying.

She noticed that he danced with genial dignity, and he found her as light as if she were a little pink balloon, giving buoyancy to him along with perfect obedience.

In the intervals of the dances she introduced him broadcast as Bayard's chum. Apparently everybody was a former crony of Bayard's. Everybody called everybody by the first name with the familiarity of those who have grown up from infancy together.

Before Wimburn had been in the room half an hour he had invitations and inclusions in invitations enough to keep him gadding for a month. His fraternity pin attracted the attention of some of the men. There was a chapter at Western Reserve University, and he was urged to accept a luncheon in his honor. He was proffered two weeks' cards at the University Club, the Hermit Club, the Advertising Club, and several others.

Already on the first day of his visit he was old friends

with a swarm of charming people, a full-fledged member of the community. He was amazed at the flood of hospitality, but he wanted more of Daphne and less of her entourage.

Daphne had to leave the ball-room early and rush home to dress for a theater party in which she managed to secure an extra place for Wimburn.

Wimburn offered to escort her home. This presented a difficulty.

"If you ride home with me in my car," Daphne said, "there'll be no way for you to get back unless I bring you back. And then we'll be just where we are now."

"I'll come back in a street-car."

"That would never do."

And so in order to prevent him from going back alone half-way she forbade him to come along at all. He insisted at least on taking her to the car.

He handed her in with the usual futility of a man lifting a woman's elbow in lieu of herself. He closed the door on her with respect. He said good-by several times before her car felt the thrill of life along its keel.

He returned to the hotel. He might have rejoined the dancers, but he was surprised to prefer the solitude of his room. He was in a luxuriously elegiac mood, brooding on the strange interest he had taken in the sister of his friend. He dined alone with thoughts of Daphne for entremets. He was glad that she should see him in evening dress with his top-hat of the latest block.

In her brilliant theater gown Daphne revealed a heightened charm. She was herself in italics.

By outrageous manipulation she smuggled Wimburn into the seat next to her. The play was a comedy. He laughed because she laughed. He loved her laughter.

He thought, "We could be very happy together."

When the performance was over he longed to take her home, but she had come down in an alien limousine. Giving her up was a wrench.

He thought, "We could be very unhappy apart."

There was a breakfast at the Chagrin Valley hunt club the next noon. He cut short one business interview and postponed another in order to dash out to the feast with Daphne.

Daphne was not there. He was astonishingly depressed. She came in later; he went from Inferno to Purgatory at once. Her chatter seemed far more important than the base errands of commerce.

Wimburn was the victim of an onset of that *delirium amans* known as love at first sight. He was at the right age, and he found something exotically captivating in this strange girl in the strange city. He was poisoned with love, and his opinion of Daphne was lunatically fantastic. No one in the world equaled her. No one ever had equaled her or could equal her in any future ever.

When she suggested a game of golf "if he had no other engagement," he rashly ignored his appointment for the afternoon. Daphne played golf well for one who did not play it very well. To Wimburn she was the very goddess of golf. Her stances were all statuettes that ought to have been immortalized by Greek sculptors. When she swung back and then down and chopped the ball or gouted the turf he found her rhythms so marvelous that he longed for a motion-picture camera to record them for posterity. When he drove he kept his eye on her instead of the ball and was glad to slice or whiff. When she beat him "two up" he was proud of his defeat.

Spring and love are the perennial miracles, always new, always amazing. It was springtime in Wimburn's years and in the calendar of the world; and countless other youth of mankind, animal kind, bird and fish kind, flowers and fruit trees and perhaps of chemicals in the ground, were feeling the same mania.

Daphne's cordiality was at first merely the hospitable warmth of her unusually cordial community. But she caught the fever from Wimburn and decided that he was

the final word in human evolution. The little motor became a magic carpet of translation. They rode less to the crowded dancing-halls and more to the outer solitudes.

They began to dread the society of others, to resent the existence of a squatter population on their private planet. The world was too much with them. The little car was transparent. Even at night, etiquette required them to light it up within.

Wimburn had admired Cleveland because of the openness and exposition of its fenceless lawns. Now he began to long for Florentine seclusions. All he wanted was a high-walled garden with nothing in it but a few fragrant flowers, himself with Daphne, and one fluting nightingale.

But he had accepted invitations in batches before he fell so deeply in love, and now he could not shake off the despotism of his hosts and hostesses. He felt that he must repay his social debts in some way.

Daphne hailed with enthusiasm his suggestion that he should give a large dinner and a dance at the Statler and that her mother should act as hostess. When he found out how expensive the affair would be he dared not back out. He felt, too, that the honor of New York was at stake. Besides, the plan had convinced Daphne and everybody else that he was a young man of great wealth. That is a tempting rôle to play, a difficult one to discard.

The festival was a triumph, and Clay carried off his part with easy bravado. He paid the bill with a check that acted like a vacuum cleaner on his bank account. But he could restore it by a Spartan régime when he returned to New York.

He did not return so soon as he expected. It seemed impossible to uproot himself from that pleasant soil. One afternoon when he had already overstayed his furlough Daphne and he were riding in the little car through the outer suburb known as Shaker Heights—a section rapidly evolving from a sleepy religious community to a swarm of city residences.

The late afternoon moon had risen in a sky still rosy with the afterglow of sunset. The air was murmurous with pleading.

Suddenly Wimburn cried aloud, to his own surprise, and hers, "Daphne! Miss Kip! I can't stand everything, you know! I'm only human, after all."

"What's the matter?" she asked in prosaic phrase, but with a poetic flutter of breath.

"I love you, damn it!—pardon me, but I'm infernally in love with you. I'm tormented. I came here on business, and instead of my finishing it, you've finished me. I'm two days overdue in New York, and I've had to lie to the office to explain why. And all I can think of now is that I'd rather resign and starve to death than go back and leave you here."

"Honestly?" she barely breathed.

"Desperately!" he moaned. "What's to become of me?"

"You'd better go back, I suppose. You'll soon get over it, and find somebody else to love."

"There's nobody else in the world worth loving. I'd die if I gave you up! I'd simply die."

This was no overstatement of his feelings, however unimportant it may have been as a prophecy.

As usual, it was the male that sang the mad love-songs. Daphne, like a little hen canary, answered the frantic roulades of her wooer with short chirps. Her response to his lyric frenzy was another brief but to him exceedingly eloquent:

"Honestly?"

He went on with aching anxiety: "Could you care for me just a little? If you could love me or just promise to try to, I could face my exile for a while. Do you think you could love me ever?"

She dropped her chin on her breast and sighed.

"I guess I do now."

The miraculous felicity of this situation overwhelmed

them both. He clipt her in his arms, and she flung hers about him, forgetting entirely the steering-wheel. The neglected little car promptly scuttered off the road, crossed a gutter into a vacant lot, scooped up a "For Sale" sign, and was about to tip over into an excavation when Daphne looked up long enough to shut off the power. Then in a blind rapture she returned to where she belonged, his embrace.

Young love is as ridiculous to the beholders as it is sacred to the blissful pair. Daphne and Wimburn forgot all things human but themselves till they were startled by voices from the road sacrilegiously shouting:

"Hoo-oo! Lovers! Lov-vur-urs!"

Daphne and Clay unclasped their arms in dismay and horror. Their love was not a matter for ridicule. They made out a touring-car passing by, crowded with blurred spectators. Daphne bit her nether lip in chagrin. Wimburn suggested, half selfishly, half for her comfort:

"What does it matter so long as you're engaged to me?"

"Am I?" she asked, touched by his eagerness to solemnize their relations.

"Aren't you?" he answered. "Won't you be? I love you with all my soul."

"All right," she sighed, and without any frivolous coquetting, she went back to his arms.

Then she switched on the electric lights and steered the car to the road again, and turned the prow homeward.

Soon she was assailed with fears for the credibility of this wonder-work, and when he said:

"When shall we announce our engagement?" she protested:

"Oh, not till we are sure."

"I'm sure now."

"But we must be terribly sure. It's such a dangerous thing, getting married. So many people who think they love each other find out their mistake too late. You don't know me very well."

"You mean you don't know me very well."

"I'm not afraid of you, but for you. I'd hate to disappoint you, and I don't really amount to much. You're ambitious and brilliant, and a scholar and all that, and I'm only—me. I don't know anything. I can't do anything except gad around; and you'd tire of me."

"Not in this world—nor the next."

"It's darling of you to say it, and you think you mean it—now. But—"

"I know it, Daphne honey, now and forever. I don't want anybody but you. Life won't be life without you. You've promised to be my wife. I hold you to your promise."

"All right." It was exceedingly satisfying to surrender her soul into his keeping. She had reached harbor already after so brief and placid a voyage.

He ended a long cozy silence with the surprising remark, "I suppose I ought to ask your parents' consent?"

The daughter of the twentieth century laughed: "Parents' consent! You do read a lot of ancient literature, don't you?"

"Still, I imagine we'd better break it to 'em."

"You leave it to me to break it to 'em. They'll be glad enough to get me off their hands."

"I'll never believe that."

When they reached her home it was late, and his hotel was so far that, since he would be spending his last evening with her, anyway, she asked him to stay to dinner.

She broke that news to her parents, and it caused them acute distress. Her father and her mother were deep in the battle that always broke out between them when the monthly bills arrived. Daphne was so used to this that she hardly noticed it.

Wimburn was so engrossed in watching Daphne that he did not heed the strained relations of the elder Kips. Besides, he did not expect adulation from his unwitting

father- and mother-in-law-to-be. He felt like a thief in their camp.

After dinner the parents retired to the living-room to read and sew and mumble over their mutual grievances, while Daphne and Wimburn sat and murmured in a very compact space on the large piazza which the full moon turned into a blue portico of mystic spell. They bade each other good nights with all the reluctance and repetition of Juliet and her Romeo. Their parting was just as vital to them.

CHAPTER IV

THE next morning Wimburn woke from dreams of bliss to the realization that his hotel bill would require all of his funds except enough for the porter's tip and a few odd dollars.

He could not buy Daphne an engagement ring with a few odd dollars, and he was afraid to leave her without the brand of possession on her finger.

But how was he to come at the necessary sum? He could not decently ask the firm he was dealing with to lend him money. He might have asked it to cash a check on his bank, but his account was at the irreducible minimum.

He was not quite foolhardy enough to ask any of his new acquaintances to lend him money enough to buy a solitaire for Daphne. He faced a crisis of financial stringency.

After an hour or two of meditation he determined to beard a jeweler in his lair and try to coax him into the extension of credit. It was a rather delicate business to get a diamond on tick from a strange goldsmith in a strange city with no other collateral than his non-negotiable face and his appealing plight. But he was desperate.

He loitered in front of several windows, staring at the glittering pebbles on the velvet beaches, till he found a tiny gem that he thought might feebly represent his exquisite adoration. He went in and asked the price. An eager salesman peered at the very small tag and announced the very large price: one hundred and eighty-

five dollars. It was not much for a solitaire, but it was too much for that bachelor.

He clung to the counter for support and in a husky tone asked for the credit man. He was escorted to a barred window where a very sane old person gazed out at people insane enough to buy jewelry. Mr. Gassett had a look of hospitality toward cash and of shyness toward credit. He probably taught a Bible class on Sundays.

Wimburn hemmed and blushed and swallowed hard. With the plausibility of a pickpocket he mumbled as he pushed a card across the glass sill:

"I am Mr. Clay Wimburn of New York City. I have been out here closing up an important deal for my firm with one of your big mills. I happened to see a little ring in your window—rather pretty little thing. Took a fancy to it. Had half a mind to buy it. But rather short of cash, and—er—and—"

Mr. Gassett waited with patience.

Clay went on: "I have no right to ask you to give me credit. But I'm very anxious to leave the ring here."

"Leave it here! I thought you wanted to buy it!"

"Of course! I want to leave it on the finger of a young lady."

"Oh," said Mr. Gassett, to whom ladies' fingers were an important market.

"Fact is, I met her here in Cleveland, and I—I—we've become engaged, you know, and I can't very well go away without leaving her a ring, you see."

"I see!" said Mr. Gassett as if he did not see at all.

He suggested that the young man telegraph for funds; that he issue a draft on his bank; that he borrow the cash; that he bring in some man of influence to stand sponsor for him; that he give a note with a satisfactory indorsement; that he have the ring put aside and send the money back from New York. But Wimburn had a suasive answer to every suggestion, and every answer

convinced Mr. Gassett that this honest-looking youth was determined not to depart without the ring.

Finally the credit man said: "I don't suppose you would care to tell me who your fiancée is. That might make a difference."

"Why shouldn't I tell you? I'm certainly not ashamed to. I have the honor to be engaged to Miss Daphne Kip."

Mr. Gassett smiled. "Not old Wesley Kip's girl?"

"I believe I did hear Miss Kip call her father Wesley."

Mr. Gassett laughed: "Wes is an old crony of mine. So you're going to marry his daughter?"

"That is my intention."

"And take her off the old man's hands?"

"Sir!"

"I mean, take her to New York?"

"Yes."

"Well, I'd like to help Wes out," he debated, aloud. "I suppose I might take a chance. Do you think you can pay for the ring in ninety days?"

"Easily!"

Wimburn would have promised to tear down the world and rebuild it in ninety days.

"I shall have to add a little to the price for the risk and the accommodation."

"Anything you like," said Clay, magnificently.

"Call it about two hundred dollars."

"Certainly!" One could hardly haggle over an engagement ring.

"I'll ask you to sign a little document."

"With pleasure."

He would have signed an agreement to surrender a pound of his flesh. While Clay waited for the mortgage to be drawn he smiled with superiority at the folly of the jeweler who put a higher price on the ring to cover the risk; for, Wimburn pondered, if he did not pay, the jeweler would lose more by the higher price than by the lower.

Clay might better have bethought him of the omens attending a marriage begun by going into debt for the betrothal symbol. But he glanced lightly over the blood-curdling warrant and signed it with a dash. Then he hurried out to find Daphne and fasten on her the glittering gyve.

He might have taken further alarm from the immense and greedy rapture Daphne revealed at the sight of the petrified dewdrop set in the golden circlet. Women are all misers when it comes to diamonds.

As the man who said everything, said:

> Dumb jewels often in their silent kind
> More than quick words do move a woman's mind.

Wimburn noted only the joy the bauble gave to Daphne, and the pretty submissiveness with which she poked out her slender finger and slid it into the fetter. He felt that the kiss of affiance was worth years of hard labor.

Once she was safely installed in the ring, Daphne grew very sage.

"It's a terrible extravagance for you, boy. It's really too much for you to spend on just only me. Better take it back."

She made a more or less sincere feint at removing it. He checked her with a hoarse cry of protest.

"Anyway," she said, yielding weakly, "we mustn't get married till you are awfully comfortable financially. I wouldn't be a burden on you for worlds."

"A burden!" he gasped. "You'll be a pair of wings."

It was hard and bitter to rend their cemented hearts in twain, but he had to go at last. She floated him to the station in the little car, and waved to him through the iron paling. She was unimaginably precious and pitiful as she stood there, and he wanted to blubber when the vestibule was slammed shut and the train slid out of the station like a merciless snake.

He vowed that he would work with the strength of ten and pile up a fortune in the bank for her. But first he must pile up enough to pay for that solitaire. He had ninety days' leeway. He wondered how he could live so long without her, and he had a feeling that he really must be adding a plain gold band to her bonds long before the end of the ninety-day respite for the engagement ring.

CHAPTER V

WE rapidly adjust our needs to our abilities, and science has never been swift enough to outrun the demands made on it. In earlier days when there were no railroads, no steamships, and no electric messages, lovers parted for long periods and seem to have been no more tortured by the delay of a tide-bound sailing-vessel or a storm-checked mail-coach than lovers of nowadays are by a retarded telegram.

Telegraphy, which should have kept these lovers reassured, served rather to keep them in torment. The long-distance engagement was a restless affair. The new system of telegraphic night and day letters was not an economy, but an expense. They could now send fifty words for a little more than the price of ten, but words breed words, and answers breed new questions.

Clay wrote Daphne a fat letter every day. He usually sneaked it in among his business correspondence and took great pains that it should never miss the Lake Shore Limited at five-thirty in the afternoon. A special-delivery stamp put the letter in Daphne's hands every next forenoon.

But after the letter had gone he usually remembered that he had omitted to include some message of frightfully important urgence. So he had to send her every night a night letter, and frequently of mornings he must fire off a day letter. These cost only sixty cents apiece, but often he had to send them in double or triple length.

For occasions where time was yet more unendurable there was the telephone: a pittance of three dollars and

twenty-five cents for the first three minutes, and a dollar and five cents for each additional minute or fraction thereof, would bring his lips to Daphne's ear.

And this extravagance was his final destruction, since her voice came over the long wire with such an eerie tone that his free hand involuntarily reached out to touch her. But his arm was considerably less than six hundred miles long, and the ironic anguishes of Tantalus were his.

From the little rubber mouth of the receiver her voice came to him as from a distant star by interplanetary communication. The sense of remoteness was unbearable. She seemed to be dead and wailing across eternity.

The torments of lovers are no less severe for being innumerable, trite, and unimportant to outsiders. Clay Wimburn was in complete distress. His health wavered, and his office work suffered till it won rebukes and threats from his chiefs, and comment even from Bayard Kip, who never suspected and was never told of Wimburn's infatuation for his sister.

With lover's logic Wimburn persuaded himself that the only one who could save him from destruction was Daphne. With her married and all, and ensconced in a little nest in New York, he could take up his office tasks with a whole heart. And though he was in a state of hopeless unpreparedness financially, he began to think that it would be nearly as cheap to keep Daphne installed in New York as to keep her informed in Cleveland. Besides, there was the old and toothless saw, "two can live as cheaply as one."

So he began to write, and to telegraph, and to groan across the living wire wilder and wilder cries for help.

Daphne wept back and repaid his longings in kind and suffered heartrending ecstasies of yearning. And finally she promised frantically to marry him without further delay.

With a desire to economize in pain she broke the double news to her two parents at the same time, telling them

both that she was engaged and that she was about to wed.

They were stunned. They had never experienced a suspicion of the acute state of Daphne's heart affairs. They had been vaguely aware that she received messages of various sorts from young men. But that was part of the business of being a young woman, and they had been glad to have Daphne at work. They would have been alarmed only if she had had no messages from young men. They had never dreamed that all her young men were one young man.

It is really astounding how blind parents are to their children's activities and how much can go on under their noses without catching their heavy eyes.

Daphne easily browbeat her father and mother into consenting to her early marriage. Her father groaned at the thought of the wedding expenses, but consoled himself with a Pisgah-sight of the Canaan when the last of his dear children should be living at another man's cost.

Her mother decently wept to think of losing her chick, yet drew a comfortable breath at the thought that she had done a mother's errands. She had accepted a soul from the invisible, wrapped it in an envelope of flesh, and carried the increasing bundle till she had delivered it to the consignee, a husband. She had earned her evening off.

Mrs. Kip made one stipulation: "I won't let Daphne sneak away to New York and be married by a justice of the peace or a coroner or whoever does such things in New York. She must have a church wedding and a home reception."

Daphne accepted this unanimously, with one amendment.

"I must go to New York to get my trousseau."

"Of course," said Mrs. Kip.

"Of course not!" said Mr. Kip.

"Why not?" said Mrs. Kip.

"The expense is the why not! What's the use of spending a fortune on clothes? The money that goes out for these honeymoons might better be turned into the wedding fund. Lord knows, Daphne will need dollars more than she needs duds if she marries that young fellow."

When his women-folk shook their heads patiently he meekly suggested, "It would be a right nice idea if Daphne should wear the same gown her mother was married in."

He had read of such a thing being done somewhere, and it struck him as a lovely sentiment. And it cost nothing.

When he heard the ridicule this proposal aroused he withdrew it hastily. Besides, his own wife had not done what bookish brides do. She had not cherished her wedding-robe as a sacred relic. She might have acquired a grudge against it instead, if it had not disintegrated into other uses. Ages ago she had used the veil as a lace trimming on a dinner gown, and the bodice she had had dyed twice, and the skirt remodeled. Eventually, when she dared not wear it any longer, she had sent it as a gift to a still poorer relation.

When Daphne's father was overridden on this point he revived sufficiently to make a desperate attack on each item of expenditure for Daphne's wardrobe. He blustered and filibustered like a watch-dog of the Treasury.

Daphne could not realize from what years of financial torment he had gained the habit of fighting every penny that rose in the budget. To the young girl in the exultation of making ready for the consummation of romance and the pious longing to go to the altar most fitly, there was something loathsome about the wrangle over prices.

She broke out at last in a revolt against his nagging. "Oh, but I'll be glad to be free from this everlasting talk of money, money, money! I hate it. I hate to take it from you. If it weren't for the disgrace I'd bring to you and mamma I wouldn't accept a cent; I'd be married in

my old bath-robe. Thank Heaven, I'm marrying a man who doesn't hang on to every penny like grim death."

In her own heart she did not realize what a grievous wound she dealt the battered old heart of her father till he sighed:

"I was like him when I was his age. Maybe he'll be like me when he's mine. If I had been more of a miser then, I guess I'd be less of one now."

Then Daphne caught the hunted, hounded look behind his spectacles, and flung herself in his arms, weeping: "Forgive me, daddy. I'm a little beast to talk to you so. I don't mean it. I'm just excited. I'll get only the simplest things, and some day when Clay and I are rich I'll pay you back a thousandfold."

He patted her and kissed her gawkily; and, manlike, having gained his point, threw it away:

"You get whatever is best and nicest. You're the pirtiest girl in Ohio, and you're going to have the finest wedding ever was seen in Cleveland. And I'll find the money all right, never you fear."

He had just remembered a bit of real estate that had not yet been decorated with a second mortgage. He had bought it secretly with the proceeds of a windfall. That was his double life. Instead of spending money surreptitiously on dissipations, when he had a bit of luck he sneaked out and invested it in something he could borrow money on in a crisis. The crisis never failed him.

So Daphne wrote to her brother that she was coming to New York to buy a trousseau for her wedding to the dearest boy on earth, whose name she would not tell him till she saw him. And would he look after her a bit and find her a place to stay?

Her letter crossed a letter from Bayard, who began it with his regular apology for his unavoidable delay in writing home.

He was used to dictating his correspondence, but he had done this letter in longhand as a business man's superlative

tribute. Also he was afraid of his stenographer. He poured his most intimate office secrets into her impersonal left ear, but he could imagine how that receiver would twitch and perk and redden at this announcement.

And so he wrote it all out himself in a kind of pink ink, with a quaint mingling of commercial and amorous cant. He had been through college, but had got bravely over any little influence the classics may have had upon him.

DEAREST MOTHER, DAD, AND SIS,—Received several sweet letters from you, mother, and meant to answer, but been very busy. These hard times forced us to cut down staff and threw extra work on men retained. But business has been so bad so long it can't get any worse. Bound to get better.

So I'm going to—don't drop dead yet—I'm going to get married. Found the angel of the world. Known it for a long time; been engaged a year, waiting to get rich enough to place her where she belongs. Not there yet, but can't stand bachelorhood any longer.

Been meaning to write you and ask blessings, etc., but the angel and yours truly have been so busy picking out a dove-cote and furniture to fit it, haven't had a minute to call my own.

Wedding date not settled yet, but probably some time in June. That would make a good song, "Some time in June." Will let you know exact date. Would be overjoyed to have the family here to sprinkle the rice and do the old-shoe stunt, but regret can't spare funds to pay the freight myself. Hope dad can, but suppose he feels the hard times, too. Anyway, wedding is to be quiet affair.

Daphne looked up to interpolate, "He means to say we're entirely welcome, provided we don't come."

"We certainly must go," said Mrs. Kip.

"On what?" said Mr. Kip, grimly. "Where's all the money to come from?"

"You'll have to find it. Do you think I'd miss my boy's wedding?"

"Two weddings are worse than a fire," said Wesley,

dolefully. "You no sooner hold me up for Daphne's trousseau than you sandbag me with this trip to New York. And there'll be a big wedding-present to pay for, too. Whew! I guess I'll go down and jump in the lake, and let the insurance company buy the wedding-present."

"It's just like you to get stingy at such a time—of all times!" Mrs. Kip railed. She had had about thirty years of daily penny-wrangle, and her nerves were so raw that a reluctant grimace was enough sometimes to throw her into a tirade.

Her husband was equally hyperæsthesiac, and a battle vulgar could always be precipitated at a moment's notice.

But Daphne had long ceased to be excited by the ever-recurrent financial scrimmage, and she broke in now with a dreary, "Can't we postpone the first round till after I finish reading the letter?"

There was more heartache than humiliation in the way their angers collapsed and retreated. As two quarreling dogs, hearing their mistress's voice, skulk apart and begin to fawn upon her, so they turned to their child with eyes full of deprecation and appeal.

Daphne, with the condescending patience of an American child for her parents, read on to the end.

Silence followed the document. And there are few documents that mean so much to every family as that bearing the news that one of the children has gone into the world and found a mate, and given up the ancient loyalty for a new.

CHAPTER VI

THE two old Kips sat brooding over their mystery. The fruit of their almost forgotten romance, the little squalling, helpless baby that had come to them and strangely evolved into a great, grown man, was now in the toils of romance in his turn. He had found, in a far city, somebody there that he loved better than his family or his friends or his freedom.

He gave no clue to what she was or whence, or how she looked, or how she would deal with the soul of their boy. Was she Lilith or Ruth, Jezebel or Martha? Their son's life was already a success with promise of triumph. Would she wreck it or help it? Refill him with ambition every day, or play Delilah to his Samson?

They did not know her; but they knew life, and they dreaded love.

Their thoughts came back from their son to the daughter sitting before them, smiling at her brother's confession of the same emotions that had captured her. She, too, was a mystery—almost a greater mystery than the son, for the very reason that she was before them in the flesh—such pretty flesh, so round, so glowing, so perilous. And then a woman always seems to be more of a mystery than a man, partly, no doubt, because she so rarely explains herself. She keeps one secret; perhaps because she does not know it herself—or else has none to keep. Or has forgotten it.

In any case here was Daphne. The proud kitten had brought in the mouse she had captured, and she was purring like a coffee-grinder. Her parents knew little

more of Clay Wimburn after seeing him a few times than they knew of Bayard's girl, whom they had not seen at all. They knew that Clay Wimburn was not half good enough for Daphne. They had hoped for a prince of power, wealth, and charm, all the virtues, graces, and successes in one composite miracle. But Wimburn was just a nice young fellow. They saw him without illusion, while they saw their daughter with hardly anything else but illusion. She was as far as possible from being to them just an ordinary, nice young girl.

As the event revealed, she was indeed something more than that.

Daphne was delighted at first, realizing that her letter to her brother would not bring forth the sarcasms she had feared. Then she realized that the news of his marriage would throw her own plans into disarray. She sighed:

"I suppose I'd better postpone my wedding till we get Bayard off our hands."

"That's a fine idea!" her father exclaimed. It was always a joy to him to defer an expense. Mrs. Kip flung him a glare, and Daphne rolled her eyes in distress, but he redeemed himself with an unexpectedly graceful turn. "It lets us keep Daphne with us a little longer."

Daphne wrote this new decision to Clay. He sent back a letter that fairly howled with protest. He had been getting better of his loneliness in the promise of a speedy marriage; the postponement threw him into a profound relapse.

When Daphne told her parents of Clay's anguish they made light of it. It was a long, long while since they had been young. They had learned that marriages contain surprises that may sometimes be postponed without misfortune.

Bayard did not write for several days. Then his letter turned everything topsy-turvy again. This time he wrote to Daphne:

DEAR SIS,—Yours of no date (as usual) received and beautiful contents noted. I can hardly believe that my little Sis is announcing intention to join the procession and get married, too. You're more sensible than I used to think. This is subject to revision when I know who the lucky man is. Who is he? Some Cleveland Appolo (or however you spell it), I suppose.

Clay Wimburn—you remember him—says you are a great favorite out there. He spoke very flatteringly of you all—especially mother. Of course I didn't tell him of your marriage. No use announcing those things till they happen, because they generally sometimes don't.

But, anyway, when I told Leila that you were going to step off into space, too, she shrieked with joy and danced up and down. You ought to see how pretty she is when she acts that way. Well, she said we simply must have one grand double wedding. It appealed to her romantic nature and at same time to my business instinct—get wholesale rates on parson, and church organist, florist, etc., etc. Saves wear and tear on ushers and bridesmaids and requires only one set of gifts for them.

But before I could write you about the double-barreled wedding idea a bombshell exploded in the office. Heads of firm decided that since we can't sell any goods in America, might try England. They want me to go over at once and see what can be done about establishing a selling agency in dear old Lunnon, doncher know. And so now I intend to combine business trip, vacation, and honeymoon in same voyage.

No time for bride to get trousseau. Have to buy that abroad. She's willing, though, to oblige me. She says a wife's first duty is to sacrifice herself to her husband's career. And, besides, clothes are cheaper abroad and styles much later. So we get married Thursday and sail Saturday. Just time to get settled in our dove-cote before leaving.

Was worrying over not being able to accept your kind offer to pay me a visit. Then the blessed wifelet darlingly suggested that her sweet sister-in-law-to-be should come to New York and make our apartment her home while she shops.

We won't get back from honeymoon hike for six weeks at least. You and mother just settle down there until you have finished shopping. Will leave key and instructions with superintendent.

The letter ended with the usual oceans of love and kisses and the usual haste. It set the family to pondering. Old Wesley was the first to speak, and his train of thought startled the women:

"So he's going to get married to-morrow. That's awful sudden! Saves us buying a wedding-present, though!" When he had recovered from the impact of his wife's look he saved himself again with a quick, pleading suggestion: "What I was thinking of was—it leaves more money for Daphne's trousseau."

The poor wretch had grown used to seeing unexpected gifts of fortune float into view like little soap-bubbles, drift close in iridescent loveliness, and then wink out, leaving hardly a damp spot.

He was used to seeing his money-bubbles vanish, but he never could see the joke of it.

As soon as he had bravely added what he had saved from his son's wedding to what he had already voted to his daughter's trousseau he was doomed to learn that Daphne could not start East to buy clothes to get married in until she had bought some clothes to start East in. And, besides that, she could not go East alone, and her mother could not go with her unless her mother had also some new clothes to tide her mother over till her mother could get to New York and buy some clothes to stay married in.

Wesley shook his head in despair and cast his eyes up in an ironic apostrophe: "O Lord! O Lord! Why did You go and make that first suit of clothes? Adam and Eve were satisfied with fresh fig leaves, but You had to teach 'em to make clothes."

He always protested, but he always yielded. He had resigned himself to the lowly office of money-transmitter; the sole remnant of the liberties he had inherited as an American citizen was his jealously guarded right of sarcasm. It was a poor thing, but his own.

"And you got to buy clothes to buy clothes in!" he mumbled. "Why, if this house was to catch fire, I don't

doubt but what you wouldn't budge till you'd fitted yourselves out with a fire-escape trousseau."

Daphne and her mother accepted the steam as reassuring proof that the safety-valve was working. He would not explode yet. But Daphne was hurt enough to say:

"I'm sorry, daddy. I'm doing my best to take myself off your hands. I'll buy just as little as I can, and I'll feel as uncomfortable as possible in that—if that's any comfort to you."

He tried to put forth his ancient plea—true enough, but rather worn with overwork:

"It's not that! I want you to have nice things, but I get kind of scared for fear something might happen. I keep thinking of to-morrow—and the day after—and next year."

Daphne's heart was full of conflicting impulses. Unable to give precedence to any one, she went up to her room to express them all in inarticulate sobs over the multiplex annoyance of the world.

Mrs. Kip rose heavily and said: "I really think that even you might spare the poor child a little of your nagging. I've had it for years, but she—"

"Can't you understand what I mean?" he cried in his anguish.

But she walked out, too. For who ever understood what anybody else ever meant? Who ever understood what he himself meant?

Wesley Kip really wanted to jump into the lake, but he was not of the deserter breed. He stormed out of the house as if he were going to rewrite his will and leave his money to a bachelor's home. He actually went forth to peddle that second mortgage. This was a commodity not easy to dispose of, and it took him a week or two to find a purchaser, and then he paid an ingeniously disguised usury for it. But he got the cash.

It irked his business soul to rob what had been a good investment of all profit in order to spend what he pawned

it for in buying fragile gewgaws. It was like grubbing out nuggets to exchange them for chocolate drops. But everybody always does it, and nobody likes those who don't.

When he came home he had worn out his wrath and stifled his commercial conscience, and he proudly announced that Daphne and her mother could start for New York as soon as they'd a mind to. They had a mind to as soon as their clothes were ready, but Mrs. Kip caught cold and was kept in the house for several days. Then Mr. Kip had a bilious attack, and his wife would neither leave him nor cease scolding him till he was well.

At last he accompanied them to the train. He was not even to have the doleful luxury of seeing them spend his money. But he put a brave front on his folly, and his last words to Daphne were:

"Have a good time, honey, and if you see anything you absolutely got to have, just you get it. And if the money you got isn't enough, why, I'll get more somehow. You can usually depend on your old dad to do his best."

He felt repaid when his beautiful child cried, "I know I can! you angel!" and reached high and drew his head down like a faithful camel's. He never told her that she was squeezing his eye-glasses into his nose. He managed not to sneeze at the exquisite agony of her curls tickling his nostrils; and she feasted his hungry ear with eager gratitude:

"You're the best and wonderfulest man that ever lived, daddy, and the only thing that consoles me about leaving you is that after this I won't be such an awful expense to you. I hate myself for taking all this money from your poor old tired hands, but it's the last, daddy; it's the last. You can rest now awhile, and I'll have a beautiful home where you can come and visit me and live at my expense."

"You mustn't feel thataway, honey," he said, as he lifted his misty spectacles from his aching nose. He

kissed her and patted her and felt unspeakably gawky, but very proud and full of blissful heartache.

And then he faced the farewell to his wife. He felt more embarrassment now than at that remote period when he kissed her the first time. She was a stranger in a rosy cloud then, and he was a daring young wooer.

But now he was grizzly where he was not bald, and she was fat and stodgy. And she had collected so many grievances against him that he felt sure she would rather bite him than kiss him.

And she felt the same of him. She forgot what things she had called him, but remembered the things he had called her in his anger, and they represented to her his real feelings for her. Yet in a deep undercurrent their love flowed as strongly and vitally and hiddenly as their blood. And their hearts wished to reveal as well as to behold it.

But the habit of rancor subdued them, and the power of spontaneity was gone. If only they had not fought so much about money! If he had been less reluctant or she less exacting!

Still they felt that their daughter was watching them and yearning over them. The old rôle must be played. They must kiss each other good-by. They might never see each other again. That thought pierced through to the quick, but they kept postponing the salute till the final moment. He kept looking forward, wondering how much longer it would take to get the baggage-car loaded. She kept talking to Daphne.

At last the porter said, "All abo'd, if you please." Daphne assailed her father with a last embrace and kiss. Then he and his wife faced each other foolishly, embraced in a wooden awkwardness and let their lips bounce off each other's cheeks.

The women-folk climbed the steps, and the porter followed them up and made the vestibule door fast.

When Daphne and her mother were seated Mrs. Kip

tried to look back through the window. She saw her only husband blurred through the double glass. He waved to her. And she waved to him. As she settled back in her curves a fat tear or two came out on her cheeks, to their great surprise. Daphne caught her mother's hand and spoke hungrily:

"You do love him then, don't you? Please say you do!"

"Of course I do," Mrs. Kip stormed back. "Why shouldn't I? He's a fine man. He's been awful good to you children."

That night Wesley Kip dined at his club, to the intense amazement of the regular army.

"What's this?" one of them snarled, amiably. "Wife dead or getting a divorce?"

"Neither, thank God!" said Mr. Kip. "She's just gone down to New York to buy herself and the daughter a few duds. Great manager, m' wife."

He tried to play a game of pool, but he was so absent-minded and so out of practice that the old guard laughed him home. He found the house full of a pleasant, tender loneliness. She had not failed to leave his things in order.

CHAPTER VII

DAPHNE and her mother had been to New York often enough, but never on such an errand. The train left Cleveland at six-thirty-five and they made their first haste to the dining-car.

"Funny, how good everything tastes away from home," said Mrs. Kip, who loved her food and hated the lifelong necessity of ordering her dinner right after breakfast every morning—ordering it raw from butcher and baker and groaning over the price of it by the pound. It was infinitely pleasanter to select it from a catalogue and have it whisked on by a black in white.

At the same table with them a brace of traveling-men regarded the bill of fare with dejection. One of them groaned, "Nothing at all to eat," and the other, "I'd give my right eye for a little home cooking."

After the dinner Mrs. Kip and Daphne, replete and content, took up the question of their errand to New York.

"We must make a list of exactly what you have to have," said Mrs. Kip.

"And not go beyond it," said Daphne. "And bring home as much as we can of what poor old daddy gave us. It would tickle him to death to have us save something."

"I guess he's pretty safe from that form of death," said Mrs. Kip.

Daphne slept little that night in her Pullman pigeonhole; she was too busy with her thoughts, and the wheels made a banjo of the rails. But she was glad of her insomnia. Even better than sleeping well is staying awake well.

Breakfast was a banquet in a dining-room rushing headlong down the border of the Hudson. The train was on time and rolled chariot-smoothly into the Grand Central station. Clay Wimburn was there by special dispensation from the office, and he had had the forethought to secure a permit to come down to the platform. He told the station-master that he had a crippled aunt to meet. He did not tell Mrs. Kip that. He let her believe that all doors opened to him.

Daphne had not finished pointing out her hand-luggage to the redcap when Clay's arms were about her. She turned to draw her trusty "Sir!" but he smothered it on her lips. He charged her mother next, and kissed her well, saying:

"That's not for Bayard; that's for me. How are you, mamma!"

Mrs. Kip blushed and squealed as she had squealed long ago when her first lover stole the first kiss.

After making arrangements about the baggage with magnificence and tipping the porter like a freshly baked millionaire, Clay taxicabbed them to Mr. and Mrs. Bayard's apartment-house, a towering habitable chimney on Fifty-ninth Street, overlooking Central Park and Columbus Circle.

They entered with a kind of awe. Seeing the bride's home before they saw the bride had something of the criminal rapture of reading other people's letters. There was no servant to greet them; a maid in the building would come in every day for a few hours "to straighten up." Their meals were to be secured from the restaurant in the building.

"Everything's done for you," Mrs. Kip sighed, luxuriously. "It's wonderful."

Once inside the apartment, Daphne and Clay had to perform their greetings all over again, while Mrs. Kip went spying about looking at things and murmuring a reverent "Real!" or an irreverent "Really!"

Clay and Daphne ignored her. They were billing and cooing like two love-birds. At length they took the trouble to look about them at the merely material world.

The convenience and ingenuity of the apartment enchanted Daphne. It seemed impossible that all this luxury, this ozone of wealth, could be secured in so small a space, on part of one floor, the twelfth floor of a building. Everything came up in baskets by pulley—people, food, everything; it was like a Carthusian monastery in the mountains—with some differences.

From the windows one looked out on the corner of Central Park where the brand-new monument to the sailors of the *Maine* deployed its masses, opposite the big prostrate wheel of Columbus Circle with the rostral column and the statue sticking out like an ornamental axle.

Daphne compared this apartment-stack with the big, rambling, stair-infested house she had left. She gave all the advantage to the apartment, in spite of the lawn and the trees and the spaciousness of the Cleveland home. She preferred the concise dwellings of New York and the communal playground of Central Park. Her little heart was lyrical with satisfaction in the knowledge that New York was to be her home hereafter.

"From now on," she said, "I'm a Manhattanette."

Aloft in this eyrie her soul seemed to lift free of the cheap, economical, penny-paring province she had grown up in. She was swinging now in the very belfry of human pride and freedom.

She was grateful beyond words to the young man who embraced her and stared over her shoulder—over her left shoulder—at the tiny commerce of the streets and the toy park. She said to him:

"Oh, Clay, this is heaven! What do you say to our having an apartment just like this? Let's!"

She felt in the arm about her a sudden slackening. The chin on her shoulder seemed to weigh heavier.

"Er—it—it would be nice," said Clay.

She turned out of his embrace and looked at him.

"What! Don't you like it? Don't you think it's simply ideal?"

"Yes," he stammered. "It's a very high ideal. But I'm only real."

She wrinkled her brows at this riddle.

He explained, "Do you know how much Bayard pays for these seven rooms and two baths?"

"No."

"Well, I've been looking about for a little nest for us, and I priced one like this. They charge twenty-five hundred dollars a year!"

She did not even wince at the exclamation-point. She asked, "How much is that?—a month, I mean." She had so little habit of computation that her brain flunked the simplest problems.

He was quick at figures, and he said, "Two hundred and eight dollars and thirty-three and one-third cents."

"Perhaps they would throw off the eight dollars," she said.

He grunted.

She asked, shyly, "And that's more than we can afford?" She had no idea what salaries were paid to fairy princes in this city of fabulous wealths. She had merely a glamorous impression that her lover was there to get her what she wanted.

"Well, we could afford it, all right," he laughed, meekly, "if we could eat the view and wear the altitude. But we've never talked about money, honey, have we? I suppose we ought to. I don't want to give you any false impressions. Shall we talk about it now?"

"No! please!"

Daphne sat suddenly. She felt as a stranger to tall buildings feels when an express elevator starts downward.

She had rejoiced to think that she was escaping from her father's nagging dollarocracy to a region of love and

light. She sorrowed a moment, then she gazed at her lover and saw how anxious he was. Her love came back to her. The express elevator was shooting upward now.

"What does it matter where we live, so long as we have each other?"

"You're a little saint," he said as he took her in a very secular embrace.

And then she began to laugh.

The whimsy struck her that she was like a bird gaining its freedom from a cage only to find itself in a trap. It was a good joke on her. She enjoyed the jokes fate played on her—sometimes—more or less.

Clay felt the jangle in her laugh and he insisted on explaining with some swagger:

"I'm no beggar, you know. I'm doing mighty well for a fellow of my age, and my future is as bright as a new pan. But I thought it would be fine if we could get married while our love is young and while we are young, rather than wait till I had piled up a big future—especially as I'd surely lose you if I didn't grab you quick. Do you agree with me, or—"

"I agree with you. You're absolutely right," said Daphne, with the positive knowledge that only youth can rely on.

CHAPTER VIII

IN other civilizations than ours the four parents of a couple are expected to do a certain amount of dickering before a marriage. In ours the parents-in-law are even more afraid of each other than of their children. It is considered highly indelicate to talk of money before the wedding. There is time enough to talk about it afterward. It does not lack discussion then.

When Daphne and Clay had disposed of their financial problem by the ingenious device of agreeing to ignore it, romance returned to her shaken perch. Clay invited Daphne and her mother to lunch "on" him. He begged them to eat early, as he had to get back to his office.

He taxicabbed them down to the Knickerbocker and lunched them so lavishly that Daphne and her mother felt thoroughly reassured as to his means. Then he left them and descended to the subway. They sallied forth to comb the shops.

This was to be merely a hasty reconnaissance. It was dinner-time before they had finished the first department store. They had bought nothing except half a dozen small bundles, but they went back to their lodging-place filled with duplex awe for the loveliness of the wares and the ghastliness of the prices.

Clay had insisted on their dining and theatring with him. They ate at the Astor and he fed them handsomely again. Mrs. Kip managed to catch a glimpse of the bill for the meal. It made her heart ache till she noted that Clay gave the waiter a dollar bill for the tip, without visible excitement on either side. She resolved that Mr. Wimburn must be very rich or very rash.

Throughout the first two acts of the comedy at the theater she was wrestling with mental arithmetic. Her son-in-law had begun the day's disbursements by tipping the redcap a quarter. He paid the taxicab man a dollar and a quarter. He gave the doorman at the apartment a quarter for bringing the things to the elevator, and the elevator man a quarter for setting them inside the door of the apartment. That made something like three dollars. The taxi to the lunch was another dollar, and so far as she could spy it out he had paid six dollars for the lunch and the tip. And that made nine or ten dollars. And the dinner was about ten more and the cab to the theater was seventy-five cents, and the tickets were six dollars at least. That was twenty-seven dollars, probably, and the taxi home was yet to pay, and he had spoken something about having supper somewhere.

Mrs. Kip was arriving toward the top reach of her computative abilities, but she said to herself that this day's amusements had "made thirty dollars look mighty sick."

And seven times thirty was two hundred and something. Two hundred dollars in a week, not counting breakfast, lodging, laundry, clothes, sickness, and sundries!

After such a day of outlay Wesley Kip would have been prostrated. The dear Wimburn boy must be pretty rich to be so gay and unconcerned.

When she had arrived at this comfortable conclusion the play was too far gone for her to attempt to decipher the plot further than to study the gowns worn by the actresses. She slept intermittently during the last act, and declined with convincing sincerity Clay's invitation to a bite of supper.

She would save him three dollars on the day, anyway.

Next morning the attack on the shops began in earnest. Clay did not lunch with them, and so Daphne and her mother ate in the restaurant of a department

store and paid for their own meal. It made a difference. Even the bargain prices for food totaled up unpleasantly, and Mrs. Kip missed Clay's shining presence.

The chaos of the styles was so complete that the two women decided to retire and study out their campaign on the war maps. They bought a number of fashion magazines, *Vogue*, *Harper's Bazar*, the *Ladies' Home Journal*, and others, and lugged them home.

They began to make out lists and tally up prices. The afternoon went by, and they had accomplished little except an itemized despair.

"It's awful, that's what it is; it's simply awful," Mrs. Kip wailed. "It costs a fortune to get nothing at all."

"I guess I'll go home and be an old maid," said Daphne. "Dad's money wouldn't buy me enough to get married in Sandusky."

But when Clay arrived to take them out to dinner he brought romance with him. He had had a good day at the office. There had been a flurry of hope in Wall Street, and everybody said that the business world had reached the rock bottom of the depression at last and started up again.

He celebrated the new era with a twelve-dollar dinner at the Plaza and another theater, and after that he made Mrs. Kip accompany them to a roof garden, where Daphne and he danced with other laity in the intervals between professional dances on the floor and vaudeville turns on the stage.

The next day there was another foray on the shops and the dressmakers, with a baffling result. Mrs. Kip had the womanly inspiration to find some cheap dressmakers and tailors and carry to them what notions could be stolen from the big people.

This required another series of wearisome pilgrimages, first to the most ferociously fashionable shops, where Mrs. Kip pretended to be from Pittsburg, and studied with laborious disdain all the latest extras in style.

Then they went to shoddier dressmakers and described what plagiarisms they wanted committed. But even the cheap dressmaker demanded such prices that Mrs. Kip said:

"Seems like everybody in New York wants to cut your rings off your fingers."

The list of necessaries with their minimum prices began to grow so long and ominous that they decided to give up keeping a list. They would buy what just had to be got, as cheaply as they could, and if they overran their appropriation papa would simply have to help them out. That night, when Clay asked Daphne, not for the first time, if she really loved him, she answered:

"If you could know the agony I'm going through trying to get ready to marry you you'd never doubt my love."

CHAPTER IX

THE daily Marathon against time and money began to tell on Mrs. Kip's patience and her strength. She carried weight for age, and she was under the dolorous necessity of realizing that all these beautiful things were out of her hope for one reason or another; they were too young or too costly or too gaudy. She was spending her husband's money and laying up quarrels for the future in order to get rid of the last child they had at home. She was banishing youth from her house and paying a heavy ransom too.

But Daphne went like a swallow. It hurt her only for a moment to find the price of something too high. The fact that she could not have this hat or that suit annoyed her hardly more than it annoyed her on the day when she went through the Metropolitan Museum, with Clay, to realize that she could not buy the Paul Dougherty seascape or order Borglum's bronze "Mares of Diomedes," wrapped up and sent home.

At night the hot bath and the change of costume were a new birth to her, and she was ready for any divertisement that Clay could invent.

Mrs. Kip went with them less and less. She felt no alarm for Daphne's morals; she had always trusted her child and never found a reason not to. Besides, a girl ought to be safe in the charge of her future husband, if ever. She was afraid only for Daphne's strength. But when she mentioned her anxiety for that, Daphne's laughter was answer enough.

If Mrs. Kip had any fears left over they were for the

endurance of Clay Wimburn's bank account, and since he showed no sign of retrenching, she dismissed that fear. She made no effort to chaperon the pair or, finally, even to stay awake till they came home.

The next morning she would waken early to throw out the cigarette stubs Clay had squeezed on the ash-trays in the drawing-room, and glance at a theater program left on the table or a wilted bouquet. She would gather up the jetsam of Daphne's clothes and do the work of the housemaid before the maid got around. Then she would order breakfast up and go in to waken her child to the day's ordeal of fittings and purchasings.

The wedding date had yet to be fixed and the invitations ordered, with their royal phraseology in the latest formula.

They placed the day late enough for Bayard and his wife to get back from Europe. Bayard had not written, of course, since his marriage, except a brief note from the steamer the day he landed. But he had set six weeks as the limit of his absence.

Bayard had been married a month and Daphne's wedding-gown had not yet been decided on. Mrs. Kip was already homesick for her rocker and her home cooking. She was homesick for a good quarrel with her husband.

One evening Clay announced that he had reserved three seats for a new comedy that had opened with success a few nights before. Mrs. Kip begged to be excused from going.

Clay urged her to reconsider her refusal, but she thought she noted a kind of harrowed anxiety. His cordiality reminded her of her own manner with some guest who had stayed too long. He seemed relieved by her final negative, but he added:

"Sure you won't go? You ought at least to see the star, Sheila Kemble. Some people say she looks a little like Daphne. Of course she doesn't; she's not a tenth as beautiful or young or attractive, but there is a kind of a resemblance. And they say she gets a thousand dollars

a week. Daphne could give her cards and spades and beat her. Sure you won't go?"

"I wouldn't put my poor feet into those tight slippers to-night to see Daphne herself play Lady Macbeth."

So Clay and Daphne went alone, and held hands through the darker scenes, wept charmingly at the pathos and laughed hilariously at the comedy, to the great comfort of the author and the great assistance of the actors.

Between the acts they strolled out on the walk. It seemed strangely country-town to loiter on Broadway in the late evening bareheaded. But hot weather brings its own customs, and women sauntered back and forth in village fashion, the men in straw hats and dinner jackets, smoking their cigarettes and smacking the curb with their little sticks. Some of the couples even visited an adjoining drug-store with an ice-cream-soda fountain. But Clay would not demean his guest or himself with such plebeian cheer.

After the last act, indeed, he proposed Claremont for supper. Daphne accepted with zest. They entered an open taxicab and scudded up the long bias seam of Broadway to Seventy-second Street and whisked across to Riverside Drive and up its meandering splendor.

"This is too beautiful to go through so fast," Daphne cried. "It's wonderful. Tell him to go slower. We ought to walk."

"It's a pretty long walk," Clay laughed, and nearly added: "It's a pretty long ride. If you don't believe it, ask the taximeter."

"I'd rather walk," Daphne pleaded. "There are benches to rest on everywhere. Promise me we can walk home. It's such a gorgeous night."

"You're crazy, darling," he said. "I've got to get to my office to-morrow, and you've got to get home for breakfast."

"All right for you," she pouted. But it was none too serious a tragedy, and her spirits revived when the taxicab

turned in through the shrubs about the old inn that had once been the home of Napoleon's brother and had heard the laughter of Theodosia Burr and of Betty Jumel in their primes.

The little frame building nestled in the moon-shadow of the austere mausoleum of General Grant, and its balconies looked out upon the titanic scimitar of the Hudson River cleaving the Palisades.

Daphne did not like the table the head waiter led them to. It missed both the breeze and the view.

"Can't we sit over there?" she said.

"I'll see."

The head waiter came reluctantly to his beck. When Clay asked for the table, the answer was curt:

"Sorry, sir; it is reserved."

Clay felt insulted. He whipped out his pocket-book and rebuked the tyrant with a bill. He thought it was a one-dollar bill, but he saw a "V" on it just as the swift and subtle head waiter absorbed it without seeming to. To ask for it back or for change was one of the most impossible things in the world.

Clay made it as easy for his new slave as he could.

"I don't think you understood which table I meant," he said, pointing to the one he had indicated before. "That one."

"Oh, that one!" said the head waiter. "Certainly, sir."

He led the way, beckoning waiters and omnibuses and snapping his fingers.

Contemptible as the emotion is, there are few people superior to the delight of being escorted to a special place by a pompous usher.

Daphne was so childishly pleased that she went forward on roller skates of pride, and Clay followed, trying to look like a young demon of the Stock Exchange. He had at least the anxious heart-flutterings of those whose pride is built on unstable coils of ticker-tape.

It did his heart good to see the effort Daphne was

making to keep from exposing her rapture too frankly. The night and the river were overwhelmingly noble, but the true appeal was in the people and the luxury and the electric-lighted world. The human note is what the human heart is tuned to, and the love of soft pelts and tender meats and of ostentation is older than the acquired taste for landscapes.

Clay responded to this wide vibration, and he ordered a supper as chastely perfect as a sonnet. It showed that he had both native ability and education in the art of ordering a meal. He impressed even the head waiter, and that is a triumph. That was Clay's purpose. His palate and Daphne's would have been content with a snack at a lunch-wagon or the cold comfort to be educed from an ice-box. But Clay felt that he had to dominate that head waiter. Also he wanted to pay his exquisite guest an exquisite compliment. Also he wanted to preserve his self-respect and the waiter's attention in the face of the supper that was being ordered at the next table. That was well ordered, too, but it was not a sonnet: it was a rhapsody. It was ordered by a man whose guests had not yet arrived. When Clay had despatched his waiter he whispered to Daphne:

"See that fellow. That's Thomas Varick Duane, one of the wellest-known bachelors in New York. He was crazy about Leila."

"Not Bayard's Leila!"

"Yes. That's really why Bayard got married so quick. He was afraid Tom Duane would steal her. Nice enough fellow, but too much money!"

Daphne looked at the big man, and caught him looking at her with a favorable appraisal. She stared him down with the cold self-possession of the American girl who will neither flirt nor flinch. Duane yielded and turned his eyes to Clay, recognized him, and nodded.

"Hello, Wimburn! H'ah ya?"

"Feeling fairly snappy," said Clay.

Duane showed a willingness to come over and be presented, but Clay kept him off with a look like a pair of pushing hands.

Still, it is glorious to be pleasantly greeted by the rich, or to be with people who are thus distinguished. Daphne had often read about Mr. Duane—not among the leaders in statecraft, finance, science, art, letters, or exploration, but in the elevated realm of expensive amusements, the elegances, and sports; she was proud to be in the same restaurant with him.

Duane loitered about, waiting for his guests. He looked lonely. Daphne felt a mixture of charity and snobbery in her heart. She whispered to Clay:

"Invite the poor fellow over here till his guests come."

Clay shook his head.

"I'm dying to be able to tell the people at home that I met the great Duane."

Again Clay shook his head.

"And that you introduced him to me."

Clay nodded. He beckoned Duane over with hardly more than a motion of the eyebrows. Duane came with a flattering eagerness. He put his hand out to Clay; and Clay, rising, made the presentation.

"You're not related to Bayard Kip, I hope," Duane said, with an amiable frown.

"He's my brother. Why?"

"I owe him a big grudge," said Duane. "He stole his wife from me, just as I was falling madly in love with her. Beautiful girl, your new sister."

"I've never seen her," said Daphne.

"Beautiful girl!" he sighed. "Much too good for your brother, infinitely beyond me. Why don't you both move over to my table? Miss Kemble is to be there with her manager. Mighty clever girl—Miss Kemble. Have you seen her new play?"

"We were there to-night," said Daphne. "She's glorious!"

"Come on over and play in our yard, then. She's terribly respectable. Big handsome brute of a husband somewhere making money. But she got restless in the factory town and struck out again for herself. She's as rich as Hetty Green. Her manager, Herman Reben, is coming along."

Daphne had never met a famous actress. She was wild to join the group and to know Tom Duane better. But Clay spoke with an icy finality.

"Thanks, old man. We're already ordered." He still stood, and he had not invited Duane to sit down.

Tom Duane looked at Daphne and smiled like a boy rebuked. "All right, I'll go quietly. I know when I'm kicked out. But next time I won't go so easily. Good night."

He put his warm, friendly hand out again to Daphne and to Clay, who nodded him away with an appalling informality, considering how great he was.

Daphne was uplifted by various prides. She had met the famous Tom Duane; she had seen him rebuffed by her husband-to-be; she had seen for the first time how instantly jealous her lover could be of her, how rudely he warded off another gallant. She had nearly met the national favorite, Sheila Kemble, who came in now with her manager.

Miss Kemble was trying to carry her new success easily. She showed the strain of the long rehearsals that had preceded her triumph. She needed either sleep or the first aid of the limelight.

"Do I really look like her?" Daphne whispered.

"As much as a diamond looks like a rhinestone," Clay answered, with complete conviction.

Other people came in, some of them plainly sightseers, some of them personages of quality. Everybody seemed happy, clandestine, romantic. There was here something mysteriously more than a crowd of late eaters in a restaurant. There was something more about the eating than

the mere eating. There was a distinct absence of wine-guzzling or alcohilarity. It was as poetic as mastication can be in a crowd. Outside were the vastitude of the river in its grand cañon, the massive bulk of the tomb of the eighteenth President, the moon and her army of stars. Within were the tables, the murmuring groups, the business of being happy.

This was life as Daphne wanted to live it. But at length she yawned. Her little hand could not conceal the contortion of her features.

"I'm gloriously tired, honey," she confessed, with a lovable intimacy. "It's the most beautiful supper I ever had, but I'm sleepy."

He smiled with indulgent tenderness and said to the waiter, "Check!"

Daphne turned her eyes away decently as the slip of paper on a plate was set at Clay's elbow. But she noted that he started violently as he turned the bill over and met it face to face. He studied it with the grim heroism of one reading a death-warrant. The amount staggered him. He turned pale. He recovered enough to say to the waiter, "You've given me the wrong check."

The waiter shook his head. "Oh, nossair!"

Clay studied it again. He called for the bill of fare, and studied that. Daphne felt so ashamed that she wanted to leap into the river. Abroad, it is believed that the man who does not audit his restaurant bill is either an American tourist or some other kind of fool. But in Daphne's set it was considered the act of a miser. Her father was always complaining of overcharges. He was always wrong, but the protest always ruined the feast for Daphne. She had liked Clay's airy way of tossing a large bill on the plate. But now he had the skinflint's glare. He worked over his check as if it were a trial balance.

"Ah, I thought so," he growled. "The bill of fare says that this Montreal melon is seventy-five cents a portion. You've charged me three dollars for two portions."

A look of pitying contempt twisted the waiter's smile.

"The melon you ordered, sair, was all out. I served you a French melon instead."

"Why didn't you tell me?"

"I deed not theenk it mettered to the gentlaman."

Clay sniffed. He was not to be quieted by such a sop. He whipped out his pocketbook and laid down every bill in it. He stretched his legs and ransacked his trousers pockets and dropped on the plate every coin he had. He withdrew a dime and waved the heap at the waiter.

It was evident, from the way the waiter snatched the plate from thé table, that Clay had not tipped him. In fact, Clay said, "This will be a lesson to you."

It was evidently an unappreciated tuition, for the waiter permitted Daphne to put her own scarf about her shoulders. He permitted them to push back their own chairs. He sneered as they walked away. The other waiters grinned and exchanged glances. The five dollars' worth of head waiter kept out of sight. The air was galvanic with the strain. Daphne thought that she would drop before she reached the exit. The hat-boy brought Clay's hat and stick, and Clay gave him the dime. His "Thank you, sir" was like a drop of water in a desert.

They slumped down the steps. The starter said, "Cab, sir?" and made to whistle one up. Clay shook his head and walked on toward the monument of Grant. Daphne followed. They went as humbly as a couple of paupers evicted for the rent.

CHAPTER X

DAPHNE was afraid to speak. She saw that Clay was sick with wrath, and she did not know him well enough to be sure how he would take her interference in his thoughts. She trudged along in utter shame.

The worst of her shame was that she was so ashamed of it. Why should she care whether a waiter smiled or frowned? But she did care, infinitely.

She had not thought that the spaces around Grant's Tomb were so large till she had to measure them in this mood.

When they were crossing the Drive to the foot-path along the parapet she had to snatch Clay back from walking into a touring-car whizzing along with midnight recklessness.

The Drive was almost abandoned now; the mighty wall of apartment-houses was almost dark. Save for a few slumbering vagrants on benches, an occasional motor or a taxicab on the roadway, a sleepy boat or two steaming up the river, the landscape was left to its own devices.

Daphne could not pump up any enthusiasm for the scenery. Her lover took no advantage of the serial of arbors and the embracing-bowers. He never kissed her, not once.

Daphne ceased to be sorry for Clay and felt sorry for her neglected self. Then she grew angry at herself. Then at him.

At length she said, with ominous sweetness, "Are you going to walk all the way, dear?"

"You said you wanted to, didn't you?" he mumbled, thickly.

"That's so."

She trudged some distance farther—a few blocks it was; it seemed miles. Then she said, "Are you mad at me about something?"

"No, of course not; it's that infernal waiter."

"I wouldn't let a waiter spoil my whole life for me, if I were you."

"His insolence drove me crazy."

"Well, let's forget about him, and think about us for a while, especially me."

He turned to her with a somber tenderness and put his arm around her. That shortened the next reach decidedly, but it did not annihilate space. And soon she was saying:

"How far is it home—altogether?"

"About three miles and a half."

"Is that all? The heroine of an English novel I've been reading used to dash off five or six miles before breakfast."

Patriotism and pride helped her for a quarter of a mile more. Then she resigned:

"I guess I'm not an English heroine. I don't believe she ever really did it."

Clay grew human enough to say, "A man I know said that the reason the English take those long walks is that their homes are so cold they have to go outside and keep moving or freeze to death."

She laughed encouragingly and snuggled closer under the eaves of his shoulder. And once more she felt that she knew him well enough to say: "I'll resign! I'll have to ask you to call me a cab."

"Pretty hard to find an empty one along here at this hour," he said, and urged her on.

"Let's go over that way to the inhabited part of town," she said, "and take a street-car or the subway."

And then he stopped and said, with guilty brusquerie, "Have you got your pocketbook with you?"

"No, I left it at home to-night. Why?"

"Daphne, I haven't got a cent!"

"Why, Clay! you poor thing!"

"That's why I was so rough with the waiter. If I'd had the money, do you think I'd have made a row before you about a few little dollars? Never! You see, I didn't expect to go out to Claremont after the theater. The taxi cost more than I expected, and then I gave the head waiter five dollars instead of one. I ordered with care so that it would come out right. But that business about the melon finished me. I just made it. I never was so ashamed in my life. And I had to drag you into it, and now I'm murdering your poor little feet."

His voice was threatened with sobs, and she dared not comfort him with the pitying sympathy that welled up in her heart. So she began to laugh and to hurry forward with new energy like a tired soldier when the band strikes up a Sousa march. She was saying:

"That's the funniest joke I ever heard. Why didn't you tell me before?"

"I've got some pride," he grumbled.

"Why, what is there to be ashamed of? The richest people find themselves without cash at times. I read about one of the wealthiest women in New York having to borrow twenty dollars from a taxi-driver the other day because she left her purse at home. Why didn't you ask Mr. Duane or somebody, and make a joke of it?"

"It's no joke."

"Why, of course it is! You have only to go to your bank to-morrow and draw some more."

He did not answer this. He said nothing at all. She had a terrified feeling that his silence was full of meaning, that his bank account would not respond to his call. She could not ask him to explain the situation. She was afraid that he might.

She marched on doggedly, growing more and more gloomy and decrepit. Her little slippers with their stilted heels pinched and wavered, and every step was a pang.

"Let's go over there and get on a street-car, and dare them to put us off," she suggested.

"It's a pay-as-you-enter car," he groaned.

The world was a different world now. The Drive that had been so tremendously lovely as she sped through it in a taxicab was a pathway in Mojave. She limped through the hideous, hateful, unpardonable length, and felt that it was a symbol of the life ahead of her. She had counted on escaping from the money limits of her home. She was merely transferring herself from one jail to another.

Her young lover had dazzled her with his heedless courtship, flown away with her on motor wings, dipping to earth now and then to sip refreshments at a high cost, and then swooping off with her again.

And now his wings had broken; his gasoline was gone; his motor burnt out; and the rest of the journey was to be the same old trudge. It was a moonlit trudge through a prolonged garden, but the moon was setting and the Drive would come to an end eventually and turn her out on the hard streets.

She rebuked herself for her mercenary thoughts and for the selfishness of her fears, but she was also afraid for the poor fellow-dupe of love. She had spent all of Clay's money and brought him to shame before a menial. She had spent her father's money, too; and for what? To dress herself up for a parade at the end of which her worn-out father would shift her from his own bent shoulders, and dump her on the neck of this younger man. And then she and Clay would grow old together, he working for money and she wrangling it out of him, as her father and mother had done, and their fathers and mothers, and grand- and great-grandparents.

She had been leaning heavily on Clay's arm. Now she

put it away from her in a mixture of pity for him and of self-reproof. When he protested, she said:

"I think I'll walk better alone for a while."

So she hobbled and hobbled by herself, he pleading to be allowed to help her. But she kept him away.

And they crept on a little farther, loving each other piteously.

The blindfold Cupid who had flown ahead of them, leading them with fillets of silk, was now hanging back, like the miserable brat that miserable parents yank along by the arms after a day of too much picnic.

In the course of time they reached the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument, and Daphne sank down at the base of it.

"I can't go any farther," she said, "not if I die of starvation." He sank back at her side. There was an irony about their plight that did not amuse them. The two wayfarers were not lost in a wilderness, but clad in evening dress, seated on a work of art, a stone's-throw from homes of the utmost comfort. The moon peered at them between the columns and the *cella* of the monument, and seemed to tilt its face to one side and smile. A motor-car went by with the silence of a loping panther. Another car passing it threw a calcium light on Tom Duane and his guests and his chauffeur. How gorgeously they sped! If Daphne had had a bit of luck she would be with them, soaring on the pinions of money, instead of hobbling on without it.

Daphne took off her slippers and fondled her poor abused feet as if they were her children. But when she tried to thrust them back into her slippers for a final desperate effort she almost shrieked with the hurt.

"I'll have to go the rest of the way in my stocking feet," she moaned.

"Not if I have to carry you," Clay growled. "No, I'll go and break into that house and telephone for a limousine. I'll hold up the next motor that goes by and throttle the chauffeur."

Before he had a chance to carry out his resolutions a taxicab that had deposited its fares at an apartment-house above went bowling by with its flag up.

Clay ran out and howled at it till it stopped, circled round, and drew up by the bridle-path. Then he ran to Daphne and bundled her into it, and gave her address to the driver.

"You're a genius," said Daphne as she sank back on the cushions.

"I'm a fool not to have thought of it before," he said. "I couldn't think of anything but being strapped."

"But how are you going to pay him?" she sighed, blissfully, as they shot along. "Not that I care at all."

"I haven't figured that out," said Clay. "I'll drop you at home and then take him to my club and see if I can't borrow from somebody there. If I can't, I'll give him my watch or the fight of his life."

"That's terrible!" Daphne sighed. "To think how much I have cost you!"

"Well, I wanted to give you a good time on your little visit," said Clay, "and it's only two days till my next salary day."

Her heart sank. Her guess was right. His bank account was dry. It had gurgled out in amusing her. She felt that there was something here that would take a bit of thinking about—when she had rested enough to think.

The taxicab swung into Fifty-ninth Street and drew up to the curb. Clay helped Daphne out and said to the chauffeur, "Wait!"

He said it with just the tone he had used when he said to the waiter, "Check!"

He was plucky, anyway, thought Daphne—as graceful a bluffer as ever was.

They entered the elevator in good form. He insisted on leaving her at her door. The sleepy elevator boy, who had taken them up often, discreetly descended a few

floors to leave them an opportunity to say their good nights comfortably.

When Clay had kissed her his seventeenth farewell and was wondering how he could tear himself away from her without bleeding to death, Daphne pressed the bell.

Instead of her drowsy mother opening the door half an inch and fleeing in her curl-papers, Bayard himself appeared in his bath-robe and pajamas.

"Bayard!" Daphne gasped as she sprang for him. "What on earth brought you home so soon?"

"Money gave out," he laughed.

"Hello, Clay," he said as he put forth his hand. "Mother tells me you've been secretly engaged to my sister all this time, you old scoundrel! How are you? What's the good word?"

"Lend me five dollars," said Clay.

CHAPTER XI

WOMEN hate one another when they are tired or disheveled. They loathe to be introduced when they are not at their best, when they are caught out in a second-rate costume, or caught in in a genuine négligée.

The meeting of Daphne and her new sister-in-law was not what either would have expected or selected. Daphne was tired in body and soul, discouraged, footsore, and dismayed about her love and her lover. She had reached the door of the apartment in the mood of a wave-buffeted, outswum castaway, eager for nothing but to lie down on the sand and sleep.

When her brother opened the door there was a flare of love and delight in her greeting, and she threatened to hug his head off. But in a moment she realized that the apartment was no longer hers. The rightful owners, the bride and groom, had come back. Their claim to solitude had some time to run, their honeymoon being still in the first quarter.

Daphne could imagine the feelings of her brother's wife when she reached her home after a long ocean voyage, a night landing, the custom-house ordeal, and the cab-ride among the luggage, and found a mother-in-law asleep in her bed and a sister-in-law yet to arrive!

Poor mother Kip, worn out with shopping, and serene in the belief that Bayard and Leila were across the ocean, had gone to bed early. She was very much at home. She had been a trifle infected with the New York mania for beauty and had determined to take back to Cleveland a diminished array of wrinkles and one less chin. She

had therefore harnessed herself for slumber in a face-mask, a chin-reducing strap, and rubber gloves.

Bayard and Leila, serene in the belief that Daphne and her mother had gone back to Cleveland, entered the apartment without formality and went about switching on lights, recovering their little home from the night with magic instantaneity.

Mother Kip's awakening came from the light that Bayard flashed in his bedroom. She did not recognize him at first and would have begun to shriek for the police if she had been a little less scared and her chin-strap a little more loose.

When Bayard caught sight of her with her rubber gloves clasped beneath her mask he thought at first that a submarine diver had wandered in and fallen asleep. He did not recognize his mother till she spoke in a strangled tone, sat up, and began to peel off her extra face.

Leila had a lovable disposition, but she was tired, and all the way up in the overloaded cab she had thought longingly of the beautiful bed in her own new home, and had promised herself a quick plunge into it for a long stay. How could she rejoice to find a strange woman there—even though she bore the sacred name of mother-in-law?

Mother Kip was horribly ashamed of being found with so much on. She ordered Bayard and Leila out of their own room till she could escape from her mask and into her wrapper.

When she was ready to be seen she had so many apologies to make and accept that the meeting entirely lacked the rapture it should have expressed. Even a mother could hardly be glad to see her son in such discouraging circumstances. All three exchanged questions more and more perfunctorily, and kept repeating themselves. The most popular question was, "I wonder where Daphne is?"

They could not know that she was hobbling down the wilderness of Riverside Drive. She, too, was thinking longingly of her bed. But long before she reached it her

mother had moved in and established herself across a good deal more than half of it. It was a smallish bed in a smallish bedroom. This had been one of the attractive features of the apartment to Bayard and Leila when they chose it, for Leila had said, cannily, "One of the safest things about a home is a guest-discouraging chamber."

They had not expected poor mother Kip and poor sister Daphne to be the first victims.

But Leila was too weary to care much. She was wearier still before she had remade her desecrated bed and unpacked a few things. She fell asleep in her tub and might have drowned without noticing the difference if her yawning husband had not saved her life—and very cleverly: he was too tired to lift her from the water, so he lifted the stopper and let the water escape from her. She almost resented the rescue, but eventually got herself to bed in a prettily sullen stupor.

From some infinite depth of peace she was dragged up protesting. Bayard was telling her of Daphne's arrival. Doggedly she began to prepare an elaborate toilet, but Bayard haled her out before she was ready. This was the final test of Leila's patience and of Daphne's.

It was a tribute to both that they hated the collision more than each other. Their greetings were appropriately emotional and noisy, and they both talked at once in a manner that showed a certain congeniality.

When at length Daphne went to her room she observed her mother's extra-territorial holdings. She stretched herself along the narrow coast-line in despair of rest. But she was too tired to worry or lie awake and she slept thoroughly.

The next morning the three women, about to meet one another by daylight, made their preparations with the scrupulous anxiety of candidates for presentation at court. Leila had not recaptured the maid she left at her father's home, and she was dressing from her trunks.

Daphne and her mother maided each other in the little guest-room where there was everything but room.

In consequence, breakfast was late and the only man there, except the evanescent waiter from the restaurant below, was Bayard.

A troop of business worries like a swarm of gnats had wakened him early. He had escaped some of them in Europe, for the honeymoon had been a prolonged and beatific interlude in his office hours; but marriage was not his career. His career was his work, and that was recalling him, rebuking him, as with far-off bugle alarms.

He was so restless that he merely glanced at the headlines of the paper. He was preoccupied when he kissed his mother and Daphne good morning, and he paced up and down the dining-room like a caged leopard till Leila arrived.

Her trousseau had included boudoir gowns of the most ravishing description and she wore her best one to breakfast. Daphne and Mrs. Kip made all the desirable exclamations at the cost and the cut of it. Even Bayard paid her a tribute.

"Isn't she a dream, mother? Aren't you proud of her, Daph?"

They agreed that she was and they were, and Bayard drew his chair up to the table with pride, chuckling:

"I tell you, this being a man of family is the only life. I'm sorry for those poor bachelors at the club."

He rhapsodized politely for a time, and then his eye began to dwell more and more on the newspapers, which he had left near his plate with a show of carelessness. Soon his rhapsody was:

"I tell you it's good to be back here and get this morning's newspapers this morning. The last New York newspaper I saw was seven days ago and it was eight days old then. I feel like Rip van Winkle. I see by this morning's *Times* that—"

"Can't the papers wait?" said Leila, who did not care what he saw by the *Times*.

"Certainly, my love, of course," he laughed, and he threw the paper across the room, and, making a pistol of his left hand, loaded it with a kiss and fired it point-blank at her head. She shot him another. Everybody laughed warmly, and Bayard once more remarked that this was the life.

But his treacherous eyes kept sneaking over to the newspapers where they lay with their head-lines tantalizingly revealed in part. He was like a boy whose new toys have been taken from him.

The young bride's eyes were fastened on her husband. He was her new toy, and he was about to be taken away from her for the whole day. She bore up bravely through the fruit and the cereal and well into the eggs before she broke out:

"Do you realize, Bayard, that you are going to be gone all this whole livelong day at your hateful office?"

"I'm afraid so, my darling," he moaned, in excellent spirits.

"But what's to become of me all morning?"

Leila wailed the question as tragically as if it concerned her lifelong fate. She wailed it no less tragically for the fact that she was adding the words "all morning" to the question. She wanted to know what was to become of her all morning!

CHAPTER XII

IT was the bride's last breakfast and the housewife's first. That is, Leila was not really a housewife; only an apartment-wife, with nearly everything done for her except the spending of her time. She had to spend her own time.

She had been spending her brand-new husband's time for several weeks, but now he was going to desert her, abandon her on a desert island of leisure and have a good time at his office all by himself.

This breakfast was the funeral of the honeymoon, and Leila hung with graceful dejection over the coffee-cup. It might have been a cup of hemlock, judging from the posture of her woe. But the he-brute, attracted by a portion of a head-line, had regained his newspaper and was gulping it down with his coffee.

He was so absorbed in the mere clash of two Mexican generals and the danger of American intervention that he forgot the all-important demands of love, and ignored the appalling fact that he had only a few minutes left before he must take his departure.

His egg-spoon hung with its freight of ivory and gold, and chilled in front of his lips, while he exclaimed upon President Huerta's failure to salute the United States flag.

What was Huerta to him or he to Huerta that he should be so far absorbed as to compel his wife to ask him twice if he wanted more coffee!

It was a pitiful awakening to the new Mrs. Kip. She was being taught that she was not important enough to

keep her husband's mind or his body close at home. He had said that she was all the world to him, and, behold! she was only a part of it. He had said that he could think of nothing else and desired nothing else but her. Now he had her and he was thinking of everything else. He had to have a newspaper to tell him all about everything in the world.

The humiliation and the cruelty were bitter. Only the fact that she was well bred and patient prevented Leila from tearing down the newspaper barrier newly risen between her and her man. Her well-breeding was bolstered by the fact that there was a third person present—two third persons, not counting the waiter. And they were relations-in-law, of all the persons on earth that should never have been allowed to witness such a rite.

Daphne felt as uncomfortable and untimely as even a sister-in-law could have wished. Daphne had a romance of her own toward, yet she was being compelled to take a glimpse at married life as it hatefully modulates out of bridal bliss.

She was like one of those mysterious people who existed outside paradise—the citizens of Nod, from whom Cain and the other young Adamses took their wives. How they must have wondered what was going on inside that walled Garden! How enviously they must have peeked through the gates! How they must have stared when Adam and Eve were thrust out, bringing with them nothing but their fur coats, a new sense of modesty, and some new facts about apples.

Some of the Noddites doubtless jeered and some were sympathetic, but all must have been profoundly shocked to find that misery and disaster had stolen even into Eden.

It was Daphne's fortune or misfortune to see a bridal couple just issuing from the eastern gate of paradise to take up their life among thorns and thistles and eat bread in the sweat of the face.

Such scenes are not supposed to be witnessed by those

who have not been initiated into wedlock. They are kept secret—to encourage the others—for whose sake divorce proceedings ought not to be exposed, since, like all other casualty lists, they tend to discourage recruiting. Or do they?

This morning's vision set Daphne's heart on a new inquiry that brought her pretty little head whacking into many of the beams that uphold society as it is. It led her small feet in their still smaller shoes into many stumbling-blocks. Her adventures with life constituted what might be called a Pilgrimette's Progress, through the busy years of 1914 and 1915.

And perhaps the course of civilization on this globe was more influenced by the behavior of herself and numberless other young marriageable women in the same dilemma than by all the bloody blundering in the slaughter-house of the European wars that resounded through the same two years.

Daphne and her American lovers were like children lingering at their play in a garden while a cyclone rages just over the hill. But the cyclone was merely cataclysm and destruction, while Daphne and her lovers were solemnly playing with the destinies of unborn children, the family of to-morrow, the home of the future, the very principles of human love.

This breakfast-table was the beginning of an epoch for Daphne. She sat with her eyes tactfully absorbed in nothing deeper than her egg-cup, but her whole soul was astare at what it was learning about life.

The sight of Leila's anguish over the breakfast obsequies of the honeymoon chilled Daphne's hope of marriage bliss like a frost ravening among peach blossoms.

Her sympathies would ordinarily have been with her brother in any dispute between him and his wife. But this was a dispute between Bayard and love. It was sacrilegious for him to go on reading the *Times* when his

bride had so much more important things to discuss. He heard her discuss them as through a morning paper darkly, and he made the wrong answers, and finally he snatched out his watch, glared it in the face, gasped, and attacked the last of his breakfast like a train-catcher at a lunch-counter.

It was thus that he heard Leila wail, "What's to become of me all morning?"

Bayard stared at her sharply, but spoke softly enough: "Why, I don't know, honey. There ought to be plenty for you to do. The Lord knows there's enough for me at the office."

"All right," sighed Leila. "I'll be brave and worry through somehow, till noon, with my sweet new sister's help. But we'll come down and lunch with you. It will be great fun lunching 'way down-town. Were you ever 'way down-town, Daphne dear?"

"No, I never was, Leila darling."

"Well, let's just toddle down to By's office and tear him from his faithful stenographers." She said this jokingly—then. "About what time do you go out to luncheon, By?"

Bayard's answer was discouraging: "Sometimes at three o'clock, sometimes at noon, sometimes not at all. This is one of the three days a week when the heads of the firm always lunch at Delmonico's in a private room."

"A private room! Good Heavens! Do people do that sort of thing in this country, too?" said Leila, who had been abroad.

Bayard answered, sternly: "It's a strictly business conversation—purely stag. I've got to be there. I'm afraid I can't lunch with you to-day."

The Ancient Mariner becalmed on the charnel ship with the slain albatross could hardly have put more despair in his tone than Leila heaped on hers:

"And you'll leave me this whole terrible day? I can never exist so long without you."

It was idiocy to an outside ear, but bald statement of fact in the world of love. It was precious, too, to one-half of Bayard's soul. But he was already half remerged from the world of love to the world of life. He was like a man just issuing from a telephone-booth and still clinging to the receiver for a last word. He called back in answer to the hail from the distance:

"I'm mighty sorry, honey. But men must work, and-so-forth."

Leila detained him for a further distress: "You'll leave me a whole day without any amusement. It isn't even a matinée day, except at the music-halls and the movies. What can I do all day to kill time?"

Bayard stared. His days were too few and too short for the work he had before him. He saw everywhere work to be done, mountains to be leveled, canals to be dug, stars to pluck, inventions to invent, freight to haul, demands to supply. The world was to him a chaos of fascinating, compelling tasks. His dread of sickness and of death was chiefly because of the loafing that they implied.

It dazed him to encounter a soul affrighted at finding itself in the presence of a wealth of time. He could never get enough of it.

Also, he felt a shock at Leila's hint that he was expected to provide her with amusement. He wanted to say, "Really, my love, when I married you I didn't know I was booking myself for continuous vaudeville." But one does not say such things to wives at first. So he said: "I'm mighty sorry, honey, but I'm helpless. I've been away too long. The office needs me. And I've spent a lot of money, and I've got to go down and earn some more to buy pretty things for my beauty."

This brightened her in a way he had not expected, and a little too far beyond his hopes. Gloom left her face like a cloud whipped from before the sun. She dazzled him with her smile.

"Oh, I know what to do! Daphne and your mother and I can go shopping."

Bayard's heart flopped. He wondered what on earth more there was in the shops that she could want to buy. She had come to the marriage with her trousseau only partly completed, on account of the haste of the wedding. But she had bought and bought in Europe. She had made his honeymoon anxious by her rapacity for beautiful things to wear. The art-galleries and outdoor splendors had won her tamest adjectives of praise or her complete neglect. The shops were her art-galleries and she thridded them with a collector's mania. The difference between the Louvre and the Magasin du Louvre for her was the difference to Bayard between the book reviews and the market reports in the newspapers.

He had not told Leila that she was partly to blame for the abbreviation of the honeymoon. She had made very deep inroads on his funds by her demands, and still deeper inroads by her silent appeal to his passion for buying things to please her.

And now that they had come back to New York with their old trunks bulging and new trunks bought abroad bulging, and had paid a thumping sum at the custom-house, now she was still eager to go shopping!

What he wanted to do was to quit buying for a while and sell something.

He did not say this. Love was slipping the bandage off one eye; but it had not yet removed the sugar stick that stops the tongue from criticism.

Leila grew more cheerful at a terrifying rate: "Go on to your old luncheon, you dear child, and Daphne and your mother and I will go on a spree in the shops. Then we'll all have a banquet to-night and a theater, and, if we're not too tired, a supper; and if you're very good I'll take you to one of those dancing-places afterward. I'll buy the theater tickets myself. I'll get good ones. I want to save you as much trouble as I can, honey. So

run along to your office and don't worry about us. But you must miss me—frightfully! Will you?"

He vowed that he would, and he meant it. She was a most missable creature.

He rose to leave, but she stopped him to say, "What play shall we see?"

"Oh, anything. What's in town?"

She ran to seize a newspaper and skimmed the theatrical announcements: "'Kitty Mackay'—awfully sweet—we saw it together—remember? We spooned in Scotch for a week after. 'Potash & Perlmutter'—they say it's awfully funny. What about that?"

"I saw it," said Bayard, "twice."

Leila turned pale. "Not with me!" she gasped. "I never saw it."

"No, it was before we were engaged."

Leila turned red. A whirl of thoughts was almost visibly spinning through her brain. It was not very nice of Bayard to refer to things that had happened before they were engaged. It was not very nice that he should have lived at all before they were engaged, though, of course, he had to have lived or they couldn't have become engaged. But at least he should not have gone to theaters with other people.

To most wives the period before their husbands came under their control is always a dreadful epoch of crime. Men of consideration for their wives (and themselves) do not allude to that cycle at all. If they are asked about it they must adopt Mark Twain's saying for a motto, "If I can't explain it, I'll deny it."

Bayard was too new to husbandship to know this. Indeed, he failed to heed Leila's torment at all for a lengthy moment. Then he said, hastily, with a laugh:

"I went with men both times, honey—business men from the West."

"Oh, I'm so glad!" Leila cried and flung her arms about him and reclaimed him to her bosom as if he had just

been pardoned from the penitentiary after a ten years' sentence.

Bayard smiled across her shoulder at his mother and Daphne. Neither answered him with a smile. Mrs. Kip was indignant at all this nonsense of Leila's. She had forgotten her own romance so completely that she believed she had never been nonsensical. She would have said that in her day young wives were never nonsensical. That is one of the favorite old wives' tales.

Daphne did not smile, either, but for quite the opposite reason. She was understanding Leila and the ever-recurrent type she was. Daphne was imagining herself in Leila's slippers on the morning after her own honeymoon. It is a crucial morning to a woman, as epochal as a boy's first smoke, a young man's first vote. Daphne wondered if Clay Wimburn would be as impatient as Bayard plainly was, to get to his work.

The question of theater tickets came up again and Bayard teetered from one foot to the other like a chained elephant while Leila discussed the various plays and people. At length she noted that Sheila Kemble was playing a new piece. It was such a success that it was advertised without display. Daphne explained that she had seen it the night before, but would go again if they wished. Or she and Clay could go to another theater. This was the occasion for elaborate debate till Bayard gave signs of trumpeting his wrath and bolting.

Leila graciously released him only to call him back to say that he had forgotten his newspaper:

"I left it for you. Don't you want to read it?" he asked. "I can get another at the subway station."

She shook her head: "There's nothing interesting in the papers. I'm just from Paris, and I know more about the fashions than they do."

Bayard shuddered a little, inly. The times were epic. Immortal progress was being made as never before: ancient despotisms were turning into republics, republics

were at war with one another; constitutions, labor problems, life problems, all social institutions, were being ripped up and remade, all the relations of masters and men, mistresses, children, wives, animals. History was being carved in granite blocks, and nearly every day there was a monumental deed that would be a mile-stone on the road of time.

Only recently the United States had seized the port of Vera Cruz and landed troops with the loss of lives because the Mexican President would not salute the insulted flag. It was inconceivable then that a year later the Mexican President would be an exile, running his lawn-mower on a Long Island lawn, peacefully basking under the flag he never did salute before he died in an American hospital. No one dreamed that the atrocities of savage Mexico would be forgotten in the barbarities of civilized Europe. But even then everybody was compelled to say, "These are great days we are living in."

Yet Leila said there was nothing in the papers! Revolutionary news meant to her a change in the fashion in sleeves, the shift of the equatorial waist-line a trifle nearer the bust or a trifle nearer the hips, the release of the ankles from tight skirts. The great rebellion in her world was the abrupt decision of the dressmakers that after years of costumes clinging more and more closely to the human outline they would depart from it in every way possible. They would seek eccentric contours and masses of fabric, beginning, however, below the shoulders and revealing to a startled and helpless world of men the hitherto forbidden realm of the armpit. As Tom Duane said in his club one day, "The women have taken every other exclusive privilege away from the men except the razor—and now they're after that."

And indeed this which might be called the axillary revolution was the greatest revolution of the time to American women. Before many months the papers were actually carrying advertisements, not only of votes, but of razors for women!

The first impulse is to laugh or to storm, but, after all, perhaps among the fatuous futilities of male ambitions and conflicts, it was just as important to mankind that the armpits should be revealed as the Balkan conspiracy, or the secrets of the Steel Trust.

In any case, Leila was interested vitally in what women would wear and what they would leave off, and grandly indifferent to which nations were shooting at which.

Bayard's horror was wasted. He should have realized that it is not given to one soul to be at the same time a beautiful, amorous young girl and a gray-bearded professor of mathematics.

If he had married the professor he would have been perhaps even more disappointed than he was in Leila's irresponsiveness. He would not have found a divine exultation in holding the professor of mathematics on his lap, nor a superhuman thrill in debating the problem of who loves whom the mostest. On the other hand, there would be times when the professor of mathematics would entertain him as a relief from too much sweets.

The mind pendulates from extreme to extreme, and even Romeo wanted to go among men, enduring Mercutio's club satire and crossing swords with the bloody Tybalt, and Mark Antony knew what it was to feel smothered even in the breast of Cleopatra.

Love, after all, is a kind of summer Sabbath in a man's workaday week; and it was Monday morning to Bayard. He was eager to get back to work. He was as thirsty for his office as a young man who has dipped into his sweetheart's box of chocolate creams is thirsty for a glass of ice-water.

Bur he lingered among the gossamers Leila had spun about him, unable to unwind himself without breaking them and hurting her.

He hesitated, appealed again to his watch, gasped at the hour and the minutes, kissed Leila violently, kissed

Daphne and kissed his mother and rushed for the door. Leila put out her arms again.

"I must be last," she cried, and as he bowed into her arms she kissed his ear and whispered, "and first, too, and all the betweens."

He nodded, and glanced again at his mother, who knew what was being said and tried in vain not to feel the knife that shoved into her heart.

Bayard felt another knife in his, and, whirling out of Leila's embrace, went out into the hall, stabbed the elevator bell with his thumb, and waited, fuming.

The door opened with a kind of stealth and Leila slipped out to take him in her arms again, and to ask, with as much uncertainty as if he had given no proof of his devotion, "Are you sorry you married me?"

He wanted to cry out, "My God! what's the use of saying it again?" but he answered her with an earnestness, whose petulance was all she received: "Of course not! I have everything in the world I want. I'm the happiest man on earth. Good-by, sweet. Here's the elevator."

"Good-by. Come home early," she sighed, and retreated. She closed the door only enough to leave a crevice to whisper a little wail through; it was like a doleful murmur from a grave: "Good-by!"

Bayard stepped into the elevator; it fell swiftly to earth. He ran for the subway kiosk, bounded down the steps as a train slid in, and cursed under his breath because a fumbling woman at the ticket window picked up her change deliberately. He shot a nickel under the wicket, snatched his ticket off the glass, flung it at the chopping-box, and plunged for the train as the door closed in front of him like a gentle sarcasm. He hated the stolid guard behind the glass, and stalked the platform in wrath till the next train slid up.

Bayard was a business man from his cradle days. He loved promptitude. He blushed to arrive late at his

office and set a bad example to his stenographers and clerks. It was his creed that success comes to those who arrive earlier on the battle-field than the others, fight harder, stay longest there, and end every day with the next day's manœuvers clearly realized as part of the next month's campaign.

There was need for concentration in his business, for he had brought back from Europe a sense of great disaster in the air. And there was no encouragement in American business except an instinctive feeling that the worst must be over because it had lasted so long.

CHAPTER XIII

LEILA'S heart sank with the elevator that took her lower in the depths. She closed the door and leaned against it, sorrowing. She wished to be alone and have a good cry. In her mood the griefs of love were as much a part of its luxuries as the joys. They were black, but of a soft and velvet blackness.

It angered her that her lover's sister and mother should be watching for her return with all their eyes. She was not ready for the scrutiny of strangers, and they were something worse than strangers. She felt the need of what many so-called savages have formed into an institution—that relatives-in-law should not exchange glances, such awful, such unmentionable mysteries being understood among them!

But there was no escape for her, and she went back to her ordeal with as much bravery as she could. She tried by praising Bayard to appease the mother and sister for her theft of the heart of their man.

"Can you ever forgive me for marrying your wonderful son?" she said to Mrs. Kip, "and your wonderful brother?" to Daphne.

"Why—why—" was all that Mrs. Kip could mumble.

"I haven't taken him from you, of course," she said. "He loves you both with all his heart. I'm just an old outsider. Will you forgive me?"

When people rob us of our things it is not half so painful if they will admit that the things they have taken are ours. Mrs. Kip was touched by Leila's apology. She silently took the girl into her arms, and Daphne squeezed her hand, saying:

"We're as proud of you as Punch. Bayard couldn't have chosen better from all the world."

Leila was in need of such support. She brightened as she turned to Daphne. "And my little new sister is going to get married, too! Oh, I hope you'll be happier than happy. And of course you will be. I know Clay pretty well. He's an awfully nice boy. Of course there's only one Bayard, but—I'm sure you'll be happy."

Daphne smiled. "I'm sure I shall." But her heart was not sure; her heart was wondering.

Curiously, her first dread of unhappiness had come from watching a pair of lovers on that summit of bliss, where the young bridegroom first leaves the warm arms of his bride to charge forth into the lists with lance couched and her favors on his sleeve.

Her next grief came from the rapturous vision of Leila's trousseau. Leila's maid arrived now and was set to unpacking. She added her squeals to the choruses of rapture.

Leila's father and mother had given her what money they could spare, and more, to spend on her equipment abroad. Bayard had contributed further. The result was a gorgeous heap of loot. When Daphne and her mother had wrung their hands and exhausted their adjectives over the last stitch of the innermost lingerie Leila said:

"Well, what do you think of it?"

Daphne amazed her by saying, "It makes me want to commit suicide, that's all."

"Why? For Heaven's sake, why?"

"Because your clothes will make mine look so old-fashioned and ugly. And we've worn out ourselves and our welcome and our money. We were going to dazzle Cleveland with the latest word from New York. But we can't afford what we've seen, and now you've shown us that what we've seen isn't the latest."

"Oh, you mustn't let anything discourage you," Leila pleaded. "Getting a trousseau is one of the worst horrors

of marriage. The poor peasant girls begin their trousseaux when they are children. The New York shop-girls work for a year. But you've got to have nice things. What have you planned to get?"

"Mother and I started a list," Daphne groaned, "but it got so long we gave it up, and I don't know how much we're in for."

"Let me help you!" Leila cried.

Close to the joy of matchmaking in a woman's heart lies the ecstasy of selecting a bride's wardrobe or a forthcoming baby's layette.

So the three women, bride-elect, bride of a month, and bride of long ago, put their heads together in a council of war.

"Now let me see. What have you just got to have?" said Leila. "Wait till I get some paper. First, of course, is the wedding-gown."

"The whole thing is mapped out in this article in *Vogue*," said Mrs. Kip. "Read it, Daphne, and Leila can jot down the items and what they'll cost."

"It begins encouragingly, anyway," said Daphne, and she read the sub-title:

"To buy enough, yet not too much, to resist the wiles of *couturier* and *modiste*, and yet to provide clothes for every possible emergency, is the difficult problem of the bride."

She read on, skimmingly:

"It is a common fault of brides to buy too much. . . . Naturally, a bride is supposed to be completely fitted out and no allowance is made for any omissions. . . . For her who is to marry in May or June the problem is far simpler than for one who plans an October or November wedding. . . . It is assumed that the bride will have already purchased her spring clothes and will have on hand a suit or two, a one-piece frock of serge or similar material, a top-coat, an afternoon coat or one of the new capes,

evening gowns and an evening wrap, one or two afternoon or luncheon frocks, and hats, shoes, and similar accessories that are still in good condition."

Daphne lowered the magazine and sighed: "That's the worst of it. I haven't a thing that's fit to wear. I waited to get my summer things in New York, and I'm coming here to live, and what Cleveland things I have won't do. Oh, dear, poor dad!"

Mrs. Kip was less pitiful. "He wouldn't buy you half you needed last winter, so he'll have to make up for it now. Go on and read."

A war cabinet figuring out the necessary military appropriations for a big campaign could not have been more anxious or felt more sure that any omission was dangerous. A war cabinet could not have felt more justified in incurring future burdens for present necessities.

Daphne read and Leila wrote down the catalogue, beginning at "morning wear" and ending at "night wear," with every wear between.

Daphne had never attempted a complete outfit before and she was aghast at the number of things a woman required for her investiture.

After the all-important wedding-gown had been debated, and the going-away gown and the gowns of all occasions, there remained the parasols and hats and gloves and shoes and slippers and stockings. These had to be a little splendid, for a bride is the peculiar pet of observation, and a meager outfit is a scandal against her father, a disgrace to her husband.

Once the outer integuments were chosen with some thought of grandeur or refinement, it would be odious hypocrisy and the worst of domestic management to have the inner petals cheap or plain. And Daphne, noting with dismay how long already was the list that Leila made, read with sinking heart the next to the last paragraph concerning things which were once "unmentionables,"

but which the advertising pages of the magazines and newspapers of our time have made familiar with the utmost candor:

"As regards the amount of underwear which should be included in the trousseau, opinions differ greatly. Even the simplest of trousseaux, however, will require at least three corsets, one for sports and morning wear—even two, if possible—and two for afternoon and evening use. If changed frequently, corsets keep their shape and wear for a much longer period. There should be at least eight nightgowns, six chemises or six combinations, or twelve pairs of drawers and six corset-covers if one prefers them to combinations. Of petticoats there will be needed from four to six very simple models, possibly only buttonholed at the edge, for morning wear and sports; two embroidered petticoats—one a bit more decorative for afternoon use, two of lace and embroidery (or one may be of chiffon or net and lace for fine white frocks), and at least two evening skirts of chiffon. Many girls who dance a great deal buy the very simple, untrimmed, pleated chiffon skirts, usually flesh pink, to wear under frocks which have an underskirt or are not transparent."

There was a dismal pause while Leila wrote down these things and set opposite each of them her estimate of what the price should be. There were debates and compromises at every point, but at length the schedule was done.

The worst of it was that in spite of the ominous bulk, the prices were all of them moderate. They were better than poor; the things they bought would be nice, very nice. But there would be nothing glorious about them—the truly rich would inevitably call them mediocre. It is odious to ruin oneself for a tawdry ostentation.

And this was the list. As Leila read it aloud her careless soul rejoiced at its completeness and the vision of its amalgamated beauty, while Mrs. Kip and Daphne passed from anxiety, *via* horror, to absolute collapse. But this

was the list—a diplomatic White Book of great historical value, a typical document in a typical love-story of the spring of 1914—far more absorbing to those interested than any love-letter ever written:

Bridal gown	$225.00
Bridal veil	50.00
Bridal slippers	10.00

GOWNS AND SUITS

Going-away gown	$125.00
Hat and shoes for same	50.00
1 blue garbardine suit	145.00
3 morning dresses	75.00
1 evening gown	185.00
1 evening gown	125.00
2 formal lingerie gowns:	
1 at	85.00
1 at	75.00
1 afternoon gown of charmeuse	125.00
1 dinner gown	185.00
1 sports suit	45.00
2 white corduroy skirts	10.00
2 white piqué skirts	10.00
2 white linen	12.00

WAISTS

2 white silk wash blouses	$12.00
2 white crêpe wash blouses	12.00
2 white handkerchief linen	10.00
1 white chiffon blouse	14.00
1 pink chiffon blouse	22.00

HATS

1 leghorn garden hat	$45.00
1 afternoon hat (large)	50.00
1 afternoon hat (small)	40.00
1 sports hat	14.00
1 morning hat	25.00

Shoes

3 pairs satin evening slippers	$24.00
1 pair walking boots	7.00
1 pair patent leather slippers	10.00
1 pair white buckskin shoes	15.00
1 pair tan ties	8.00
1 pair dress shoes	14.00
1 pair satin mules	8.00
1 pair traveling folding slippers	3.00
1 pair tennis shoes	6.00

Coats and Wraps

1 silk sweater	$29.00
1 white corduroy coat	15.00
1 evening coat, taffeta	150.00
1 heavy motor or traveling cloak	90.00
1 lace evening scarf	30.00
1 chiffon evening scarf	12.00

Parasols

1 dark-green silk	$12.00
1 rose and ivory	16.00
1 white painted chiffon	30.00

Veils	$25.00

Gloves

6 pairs glacé evening gloves	$24.00
4 pairs chamois gloves	8.00
6 pairs short white glacé gloves	12.00
4 pairs colored suède gloves	8.00

Lingerie

3 corsets	$72.00
3 chiffon evening petticoats	18.00
2 crêpe petticoats	14.00
1 taffeta petticoat	12.00
4 white wash petticoats	28.00
1 fine lingerie petticoat	26.00

3 princess slips for lingerie gowns	$21.00
1 satin morning petticoat	12.00
4 nightgowns	48.00
2 nightgowns	12.00
6 silk skirts	36.00
6 pairs black silk stockings	12.00
2 pairs fine silk stockings	12.00
6 pairs white silk stockings	12.00
6 pairs assorted colors silk stockings	16.00
6 crêpe combinations	56.00
3 muslin hand-embroidered combinations	42.00
1 chiffon tea gown	60.00
1 crêpe négligée	18.00
1 crêpe négligée	12.00
1 chiffon breakfast jacket	24.00
3 chiffon and lace boudoir caps	17.00
3 crêpe boudoir caps	9.00
3 dozen handkerchiefs with initial	21.00

There was a long silence after the death-warrant was ended.

If it had been a suddenly revealed list of Clay Wimburn's secret crimes Daphne could not have felt it more dramatic. For money matters are the continuous drama of our lives. They thrill us to our noblest and basest souls and test them crucially.

Mrs. Kip had lived long enough to be prepared for anything atrocious, and disappointment was her daily bread. She had a positive appetite for it. She asked, hungrily, "What does it total up?"

Totaling it up was a task that overwhelmed all three. Leila added up and down and totaled the totals. The totals up were not at all akin to the totals down. The multiplications and subtractions did not prove. Daphne tried her hand with several new results all discrepant with Leila's bookkeeping and her own. Mrs. Kip declined to attempt such a mountain of figures.

But while the results varied picturesquely in details,

they agreed that the amount required for this modest equipment was something a little under or a little over three thousand dollars.

"Three thousand dollars!" Daphne cried. "It might as well be three million. That finishes it. I'll be married in my mackintosh and a pair of rubber boots."

CHAPTER XIV

IT was a time when everybody was cutting down appropriations, reducing expenses. Cities, counties, states, nations were all paying the penalty of former extravagances by present economies. Rich people were positively boastful of their penuries.

The three women assailed their list with the ruthlessness of an auditing committee. They cut out this and that, decided that this gown could be omitted or postponed, that waist could be had in a cheaper quality, these parasols were not really necessary, those stockings need not be so numerous all at once.

On further revision the longing for completeness seized them again; they restored as many things as they took off. It seemed intolerable for Daphne to approach the married estate like a traveler whose baggage has been lost in a wreck.

And yet even Mrs. Kip admitted that the whole array was far beyond the reach of her husband's means. Still she insisted that he could provide a partial trousseau at least. She herself would "go without things" for ten years if necessary.

Daphne, however, was haunted by the vision of her father's harrowed, money-hungry face. When her mother reminded her that it was his last chance to do anything for her, she retorted, "Yes, and it's my last chance to do anything for him."

In her patience she attacked the wedding-gown itself: "Why have a wedding-gown? And that veil business. I'm no shy young flower not ready to be seen! Everybody

has seen me. And why must we have the wedding in a church? Why give a reception? It's only to show off before a lot of people in a town I'm going to move away from. And if I were going to stay there what difference would it make? They all know me. And they'd all know that I bankrupted poor dad and robbed mamma of money that would have bought her luxuries for years—and all for what?—to walk down a church aisle and have everybody say 'Ooh!' And they wouldn't say it!"

Mrs. Kip stared aghast at this assault on sacred institutions. It was almost atheism. Leila tried to quiet the young rebel:

"It's not that, dear," said Leila. "But you've got to have some new things. You can't march into your husband's life with no equipment. You can't expect him to fit you out."

Daphne remembered Clay's financial cramps, and realized that if she wanted any clothes she would better take them from her father. Clay had made her walk down Riverside Drive because he was out of funds; how could she count on his filling out her wardrobe?

Her pride was wrung by her plight. She must either go shabby or cause acute distress to one or both of the men that were dearest of all in the world to her. She must leave behind her a burden of debt as a farewell tribute to her father, or she must bring with her a burden of debt as her *dot*.

"No!" she cried, with a sudden impatient slash at the Gordian knot. "Clay will have to take me just as I am or take back this diamond ring he wished on me."

Her defiance was not convincing. Her mother protested:

"It's not Clay that you have to consider. He'll never know what you have on. It's the guests at the wedding—and your old friends and the neighbors. You don't want them to think we're poor and that your father is marrying you off cheap, do you?"

Daphne flared back, "It seems mighty foolish to go and make yourself really poor in order to keep from seeming poor, especially when you never fool anybody except yourself."

Leila, with the magnanimity of a native spendthrift, tried to soothe the fever of the rebel:

"I know just how you feel, my dear. I've often been through it myself. But I realized that it's a girl's business to look well and she can't succeed without help. The men would rather work a little harder and have us handsome than loaf and have us dowdy. And if we didn't spend the money on clothes, they'd spend it on more foolish things, like speculations. My father has lost thousands of dollars on investments that might just as well have been spent on my clothes." She was a philosopher of a sort, Leila.

Mrs. Kip agreed with her heartily. Among her bitterest grievances against her husband were the sums he had lost in stocks and bonds, in indorsing notes for friends, and in trying to increase his income by the usual methods of financial agriculture. She would have given Leila her unbounded approval if it had not been her own son who was to support Leila's pretty theory that a husband's money is made to buy a wife pretty things with.

Leila pressed her success: "Anyway, it won't do any harm to look about a little. If you can't have the whole trousseau, you can have two or three extra-nice things. You might pick up some wonderful bargains. Let's go prowling around, anyway. I may see something I want for myself. Bayard dragged me away from Paris before I had finished shopping. There are several things I need desperately."

Daphne glanced at the little mountains of clothes heaped up about the apartment, and understood what Bayard had felt. Still, Daphne was very woman, and she is no woman who can resist the *Wanderlust* of exploring

the bazars. But Daphne resolved loftily that she would not buy.

The three wise women set forth: they joined the petticoated army pouring from all the homes like a *levée en masse*, a foray of pretty Huns.

They meant hardly more than to observe and investigate. But the first shop they stopped at roused in them a frenzy to possess. Daphne was beautiful and loved beauty. She revered the correct and the new.

It humiliated her to realize that the dressmaker's models were looking at her street suit and saying to themselves that it was built on yesterday's pattern. The edict had just gone forth from the high places that the "slim, straight silhouette" was no longer right. It would soon be indecent to go about in skirts and waists that followed the body and clung to it. There was a kind of pauper's nakedness in it. It would bring discredit on the fathers and brothers and husbands of the shameless creatures whose costumes did not flare.

The same shame is felt among men for other sorts of unfashionableness. It fills with remorse the scientist who finds that he has been wearing in public an hypothesis that was referred to last week in *Science* as an exploded theory. The American author blushes to find that an English book-reviewer has derided one of his expressions as an Americanism. The doctor, the parson, the business man, the painter, musician, all or any who are caught abroad in the daylight in ideas that are just out of style, repent the crime of being unfashionable.

Leila conducted her little troop finally to the famous dress-laboratory in which Lady Powell-Beauclerc (spoken "pole-buckler") experimented in whimsies. Leila had once had the distinction of buying several gowns and hats of Lady P.-B., and she was on the glorious list of those who were invited to the first view of each new season's output—the varnishing day, as it were, of the style gallery.

Lady Powell-Beauclerc happened to be passing through her shop. She pretended to remember Leila and Leila introduced Mrs. Kip and Daphne to her. Mrs. Kip almost swooned and Daphne was hard put to it to act as if she were used to meeting Ladies with a capital L. Before she left she was rather giving the impression that she bought her shoes of a countess and her green groceries of an earl.

When Lady Powell-Beauclerc learned that the exquisite Daphne was about to be a bride she greeted her with rapture:

"Oh my dear! You are just the child I'm looking for—color, size, everything! You shall be the first to wear my newest dreams. I have two newest dreams, and you may have first choice."

She proceeded to describe the costumes with an orgy of technical terms that would be tolerated from none but a writer of nautical stories. A layman could understand nothing of it except that one of the bridal robes had no train at all and that the other had two.

Before Daphne could explain that she dared not choose either gown, Lady Powell-Beauclerc, like a great pianist who will either not play at all or will not stop, once started, was away on a rhapsody concerning the costumes for the six bridesmaids.

These were triumphant—they included embryonic hoopskirts and more or less deprecatory pantalets. Daphne was enchanted with the vision of herself in a two-trained gown sailing down the aisle as the flag-ship of such a white squadron. She could have wept at the cruelty that denied her the great experience. But she did not tell Lady Powell-Beauclerc that she could not afford the bridesmaids, or that she could not afford to be one of Lady Powell-Beauclerc's most exclusive brides.

Instead, she and her heartsick mother made ready to retreat by asking the prices, discussing the details, and generally comporting themselves as if they were going

to buy. Under the cover of this maneuver they escaped gracefully. Among men, this same method is also used for bringing off hopelessly defeated armies; the rear guard attacks with vigor and pretends to be ready for anything; then vanishes.

Lady Powell-Beauclerc disgustedly recognized the familiar symptoms, and turned the Kips over to a saleswoman to be put out quietly.

The three Kips rallied on the pavement outside and tried to console themselves by saying that Lady Powell-Beauclerc's ideas were ridiculous and her prices were murderous. Why deny the hungry fox the poor solace of calling the high grapes sour?

Daphne and her mother and Leila wandered from shop to shop like a trio of foxes; but the barriers of price were too lofty everywhere, or where the prices were low the styles were lower.

At length they reached the alluring place where the famous Dutilh, like an amiable Mephistopheles, offered to buy souls in exchange for robes of angelic charm.

In the window, on a dummy, with no head, no feet, and a white satin bust, hung a gown that seemed to cry aloud to Daphne:

"I belong to you and you belong to me! Fill me with your flesh and I will cover you with an aureole."

The three forlorn women understood the message instantly. They looked at one another, then, without a word, entered the shop, doomed in advance.

Leila was known to Dutilh and he greeted her with an extravagant impudence that terrified Mrs. Kip:

"You little devil!" he hissed. "Get right out of my theater. How dare you come here after letting somebody else build your trousseau?"

Leila apologized and explained and he pretended to be mollified as he pretended to have been insulted. He even praised the gown she wore, and told her where she got it in

Paris, and how much she paid for it. Then he had its twin fetched out, and told her that she could have had it from him for less than she paid in Paris.

Having thus made the field his own, he turned to Daphne, studied her frankly with narrowed eyes as if she were asking to be a model, and sighed:

"Oh, my God, what a narrow escape!"

Daphne jumped and gasped, "From what?"

"That gown in the window, that Lanvin that was born for you. You must have seen it—the afternoon one in parchment-toned taffeta and tulle."

The women, astounded by his intuition, nodded and breathed hard, like terrified converts at a séance. He was referring to the one that belonged to Daphne, and he went on:

"There was a big, fat, old cow in here yesterday, that Spanish marquesa—used to be Mrs. Tim Verplanck, you know. She was simply determined to have that gown. I almost had to tear it off her back. I told her it would ruin me to have her seen in it. She tried to bribe me by offering me twice the tag, but I told her to get out and stay out."

The astounding thing was that what he said was true. He was a priest of beauty and more sincere than many of the more sober cloth. His sincerity had been his success, and women loved to have him browbeat them, as they love to have their physicians and their preachers browbeat them, for their own good.

The marquesa had surrendered the Lanvin gown, but she had been sufficiently impressed to buy three others that Dutilh selected for her. Honesty is the best policy.

In any case, Dutilh hailed Daphne as the rightful heiress to the Lanvin gown, and ordered her to get into it at once.

She demurred: "I'm afraid of the price. How much is it, please?"

"Don't talk of money!" Dutilh stormed. "I hate it!

Let's see the gown on you." He called one of his tawny manikins. "Help Miss Kip into this gown, Maryla."

A mournful-eyed beauty led Daphne into a dressing-room and acted as maid. Daphne stepped out of her street suit into the Parisian froth as if she were going from chrysalis to butterfly. Maryla was murmurous with homage as she fastened it together and led Daphne forth.

Mrs. Kip felt as if she had surrendered a mere daughter and received back a seraphic changeling. Daphne was no longer a pretty girl; she was something ethereal, bewitched and bewitching. If she could own that gown her mother would be repaid for all her pangs from travail on. She would accept the gown as advance royalty on any future hardships.

Daphne's joy was like steam within her, threatening either to lift her from the ground or blow her to pieces. If she had thought of it, she would have said that she knew now why women sin for such costumes. She would have questioned whether it could be a sin to claim for one's soul and body such advantage.

She looked about for Leila, but Leila was gone. She reappeared a moment later in a costume almost more delicious than Daphne's—a tunic of peach-blow tulle caught up with pink rosebuds and hanging from a draped bodice of peach-blow satin that formed a yoke low on the hips. And there was a narrow petticoat of peach-pink satin. It was as if peaches had a soul, as perhaps they have.

The two girls in their differing, yet rivaling, charms faced each other as a dryad and a nymph might have met. They were proud to be themselves and proud to be kinfolk.

Dutilh fluttered from one to the other, almost as happy as either.

There were times when great warriors and statesmen used to bedeck themselves in just such splendors of fabric and color without loss of dignity. The sensation

of feeling oneself clad with the rainbow has long since been lost to malekind. Among our poorer relations of the animal world the masculine still claims the privilege of being gorgeous, but the man has transferred it to his wife's name.

Perfect happiness is said to need a bit of horror to make it complete. The happiness of the two girls did not lack that element. The price of their glory furnished it. They asked the cost with anxiousness.

"The one Miss Kip has on," said Dutilh, "the marquesa offered me five hundred for. To Miss Kip I'll let it go dirt cheap for three hundred and twenty-five. The one Miss—er—Mrs. Kip has on I'll give away for—ummh, well—say the same price."

Daphne and her mother were sickened. Mrs. Kip put up a fight:

"Why, there's nothing to it but a little taffeta and tulle."

"There's nothing to a Raphael 'Madonna' but a little paint and canvas," said Dutilh. "You can get a chromo of it for a dollar and a half."

Mrs. Kip answered this quickly: "How much would you copy these for?"

Daphne winced. It was odious to discuss the subject.

"I can make you a copy of each for about half price. But it will take some time."

"How much is half of three hundred and twenty-five dollars?" said Mrs. Kip, whose brain balked at the altitudes.

Dutilh told her. She groaned. But Daphne was suffering one of those gusts of mania that ruin people. Her soul of souls clamored to wear that very gown that very afternoon. A copy of it would be as disgusting as paste jewelry. Even to take it off would hurt like flaying.

Leila had the same feeling. Her appetite for resplendent gowns had grown with exercise.

Dutilh took pity on them: "Look here," he said, "I'll

make the price two hundred and seventy-five. It's giving them away, but you are such visions in them!"

It was a big reduction, but it left the price still mountain high.

"I want something to wear to-morrow afternoon," Leila said. "I've got to go to a tea and my sister has to go with me."

Daphne had not heard of the tea, but she wanted somewhere to go in that gown.

Dutilh smiled: "Nothing easier. Take the duds with you or let me send them. Where are you living now?"

Leila told him the name of the apartment hive. He pondered that people who lived there must have a lot of money or a gift for credit. But he said: "There's one other gown I want to show you. It might suit you better. And it's much cheaper."

He knew womankind and he knew that Daphne and Leila and Mrs. Kip hated that unseen gown already. He left them in a mood of rebellion. They did not want anything else, especially anything cheaper. He went to a telephone in his office, called up a mercantile bureau, and asked after the rating of Bayard Kip. He received the reassuring report that B. Kip was a young man of means with an unusual record for prompt payments. He learned his salary exactly and the clean record that had been Bayard's pride.

Then he picked out an unattractive frock and returned. The three women turned up their noses at it. Leila made a confession:

"The trouble is, Mr. Dutilh, that I'm just back from Paris and I haven't a cent left, and Miss Kip is buying her trousseau and has spent more already than she expected to."

Dutilh rose to the bait that he had expected them to dangle: "That's simple. Why not open an account with me? Take the gowns along and pay me when you like."

Leila hesitated and Daphne shook her head.

Leila mumbled, "I should have to ask my husband."

Daphne said, "My father wouldn't like me to start an account."

"Charge it to your sister's account, then, and pay her."

But the girls played the heroine even to the taking off of the gowns and the return to their street gear. They bade the place farewell with dreary fortitude, and walked out.

But they paused on the sidewalk for a conference.

Daphne groaned, "I'll die if I don't get that gown."

Leila said: "Oh, come along! When you feel like that about anything, I always say it's a kind of an instinct that it's something you ought to buy."

Daphne imagined again her father's worried look. She shook her head:

"I can't have it charged to dad. I mustn't. I won't."

"Charge it to Bayard, then," said Leila. "You can pay him whenever it's convenient. He'd love to have you have it. Call it his wedding-present."

Daphne wavered in a dizzy whirl of torment. And then she saw the girl Maryla appear in Dutilh's window and put the Lanvin gown back on the form. Daphne could not bear the sight of it exposed for sale. She clutched Leila's hand and they went back.

"You say you would charge them both to me?" said Leila.

"Certainly," said Dutilh.

"Send them, then," said Leila, with imperial brevity.

"Thank you," Dutilh smiled. "You shall have them this afternoon. And by the way, I've just remembered a marvelous design of Paul Poiret's. Let me show it to you."

"Come quick; let's run," said Daphne, and she hurried out of the infernal paradise.

CHAPTER XV

THE Kips rejoined the sidewalk throngs and Daphne's head ached with a pleasant sense of guilt.

"Where shall we go next?" said Leila, the insatiable.

"Let's go home and get away from the sight of these wicked windows," said Daphne. "I'll never trust myself again."

"Couldn't we have some lunch somewhere? I'm faint," sighed Mrs. Kip, who was exhausted with emotion.

"I'll take you to the Plaza if we can get a taxi," said Leila.

"No, you won't," Mrs. Kip exclaimed. "Let's eat at some nice quiet place. Goodness knows we've spent enough money for one day."

Yet even she felt that the spending of so much money compelled the spending of more. People who bought such clothes could not afford to eat shabbily.

They dawdled on, down the Avenue, pausing at window after window, each flaunting opportunities for self-improvement. But Daphne's joy in her new gown was turning to remorse. She was realizing that that parchment-toned taffeta needed parchment-toned stockings and slippers and a hat of the same era as the gown.

She had bought herself incongruity at a heavy price. And she wanted some jewelry, and an automobile, and two men on the box, and a garage. She was really no further along than she had been.

Rich people went by in floods, among people who looked rich. Crested limousines were so numerous that the very mob seemed to be wealthy. Where, then, was she—

the poor daughter of an anxious father, the destined bride of a young man of no bank account? Why could she not have been the daughter of a millionaire? Why could she not have loved a millionaire? Why must she look forward, as she looked backward, to a life infected with the money question?

She was startled from her reveries by the sudden gasp of Leila:

"If there isn't Tom Duane just coming out of his club!"

"I met him last night," said Daphne.

"You did? Did he say he knew me?"

"He said that Bayard stole you from him."

Leila was flattered, but loyal: "Nonsense. I was never his to steal. I never loved him, of course. It wouldn't have done any good if I had. Tom Duane's a non-marrier. He's known all the débutantes for years, and most of them have flirted at him, but they couldn't get him."

"He's awfully rich, I suppose," said Daphne.

"No, not rich at all, as rich people go. But he was mentioned the other day in the will of an old aunt he used to be nice to. He's nice to everybody."

Duane met them now and paused, bareheaded, to greet Daphne with flattering cordiality. She was greatly set up to be remembered. She presented him to her mother, who was completely upset at having to meet so famous an aristocrat right out in the street when she was still flustered over the ferocious price of Daphne's new dress.

Leila spoke to him with gloating humor. "Hullo, Tommy!"

"I don't know you," he said. He turned to Mrs. Kip. "You mustn't blame me, Mrs. Kip, for your son's trouble. I tried to save him from her by sacrificing myself, but because your son had brains and beauty she snapped him up and left me cold."

Mrs. Kip had a vague feeling that he was whimsical and that an answer in kind was expected, but the dear soul

could no more have been whimsical than a hen could be chivalrous.

"Will you have a bite of lunch with me?"

"We were just going to have something somewhere," said Mrs. Kip.

"My husband would object," said Leila.

"I'm not inviting you," said Duane, "I'm inviting the genuine Mrs. Kip. You may come along as old married chaperon, if you have to."

"But Miss Kip is engaged."

"So I suspected. That's why I'm inviting her. I feel safe—that is, provided her mother is not a widow."

He was ashamed of this rather crude impromptu after he had uttered it, but it did poor Mrs. Kip a world of good. So many years had drifted by since her heart had been regarded as anything but a harmless, burnt-out shell that even a fantastic impertinence like Duane's was strangely pleasant, a sudden reminder of old springtimes when she, too, was perilous to young men and an anxiety to her parents. She giggled, and a pitiful little blush rippled through her wrinkles. Duane caught the look and the choked laughter and was not sure whether he had been a benefactor or a brute.

He tried to make up for it by an extreme attentiveness and gallantry. He urged her to honor him and Delmonico's with her company. He said that if she wanted to shake the two younger sisters, he and Mrs. Kip would elope together.

Mrs. Kip could not trust herself to bandy flirtatious remarks with Tom Duane. She smiled as well as she could and suffered him to lead them to Delmonico's, which was not far from where they were. Duane walked with Mrs. Kip and let Daphne and Leila follow after. Leila revenged herself by telling Daphne all the gossip she knew about him. He was popular at his clubs, old ladies and children adored him, débutantes fell in love with him in vain and later treated him as an elder brother.

He knew everybody of every sort from taxicab-drivers to visiting princes. He was irresistibly affectionate with all the world, but apparently immune to love.

He was the sort of man whose heart Daphne or any girl would have enjoyed breaking. Daphne put away the temptation, reminding herself that she was not free for such target-practice.

As they turned east into Forty-fourth Street and entered Delmonico's the carriage man saluted Duane, pedestrian as he was, called him by name, and seemed to be happier for seeing him. The doorman smiled and bowed him in by name, and Duane thanked him by name. The hat-boys greeted him by name and did not give him a check. The head waiter beamed as if a long-awaited guest of honor had come, and the captains bowed and bowed.

"You'd think his middle name was Delmonico," Daphne whispered to Leila as they followed to a table whence a card "Reserved" was removed with marked contempt.

Duane did not ask his guests what they would have. The head waiter told him in a low voice what he ought to have.

Cocktails were set about. A little baby-carriage loaded with *hors d'œuvre* was rolled up, and some of the wildest combinations that ever bewildered a palate were ladeled out with little wooden spoons and forks. Daphne and Leila demanded many anchovies and ate them with such relish that Mrs. Kip, who did not include anchovies in her acquaintance, took one of the little spirals. She thought for a moment that her mouth was turning inside out. But the rest of the procession was a carnival to her.

After some hesitation she had the good sense to tell Duane how delicious everything was, and he told her that she showed discrimination, for it was all mighty good. He told the head waiter to tell the chef that Mrs. Kip said so. The head waiter rushed off in great excitement, and Mrs. Kip nearly smothered with awe.

Daphne rejoiced in it, too. All luxury was music to her. Fine clothes, fine foods on fine dishes, fine horses, motors, furnitures, fine everything, gave her an exaltation of soul like the thrill of a religion.

New York was heaven on earth. The streets were gold, the buildings of jasper, and the people angels—good angels or bad, as the case might be, but still angels. She wanted to be an angel.

Among the squads of men and women camped about the little tables she made out Sheila Kemble again, in a knot of elderly women of manifest importance. They knew it themselves and were trying violently to forget it.

"Isn't that Sheila Kemble?" Daphne asked.

Duane twisted about and stared with frank awkwardness. He did so many of the things forbidden in the correspondence schools of etiquette that Mrs. Kip's standards were all askew.

"Yes, that's Sheila," said Duane, and he waved to her and she to him. He turned back to Daphne. "Awfully nice girl. Like to meet her?"

"I'm crazy to."

"I'd bring you together now, but she's completely surrounded by *grandes dames*."

He named the women, and Mrs. Kip gaped at them as if they were a group of Valkyrs in Valhalla. It startled her to see them paying such court to an actress. She said so.

"All great successes love one another," Duane explained. "Those old ladies were geniuses at getting born in the best families, and Sheila has earned her place. She looks a bit like your daughter, don't you think?"

Mrs. Kip tilted her head and studied Miss Kemble and nodded. She made the important amendment. "She looks like she used to look like Daphne."

"That's better," said Tom Duane. "Miss Kip might be her understudy."

"How much does an understudy get?" said Daphne, abruptly.

"I haven't the faintest idea!" Duane exclaimed. "Not much, I imagine, except an opportunity."

"Is it true that Miss Kemble makes so much?"

"I'd like to trade incomes with her, that's all. Her manager, Reben, was telling me that she would clear fifty thousand dollars this year."

Mrs. Kip was aghast. Daphne was electrified. She was thinking: "We look so much alike and our lots are so much unlike. She works and I loaf. She buys her own things—and all she wants of them. I have to rob my poor old dad to get half of what I need. If I had her money, or only a part of it, I could pay dad back and help him out, and I could rent an apartment as fine as Bayard's for poor Clay and me. I could take burdens off people's backs, and put fine clothes on my own. And I'd be earning it. That's better than inheriting it."

She had the wholesome American idea that each generation should build up its own fortunes and that fresh money earned is better than old money plucked from old family bushes.

She surprised Duane with another question: "You said Miss Kemble was married?"

"Yes, and has children, and loves her husband. But she couldn't stand idleness. She's just come back to the stage after several years of rusting in a small city."

Daphne fired one more question point-blank: "Do you think I could succeed on the stage?"

Before Duane could answer, Mrs. Kip broke in with a rebuke: "Daphne, what on earth you asking such questions for? As if you were thinking of going on the stage!"

"I'm thinking of lots of things," said Daphne.

"But you've got Clay, haven't you?"

"I'm thinking of him, too," she said, and turned again to Duane. "Do you think I could succeed on the stage?"

"Why not?" he answered. "You have—with your mother's permission—great beauty and magnetism, a delightful voice, and intelligence. Why shouldn't you succeed? You would probably have a peck of trouble getting started, but— Do you know any managers?"

"I never met one."

"Well, if you ever decide that you want to try it, let me know, and I can probably force somebody to give you a job."

"I'll remember that," said Daphne, darkly.

She said nothing more while the luncheon ran its course.

The women got rid of Tom Duane gracefully—Leila asked him to put them in a taxicab, as they had still much shopping to do. They rode to a department store, and Leila started another account. She bought several things as gifts for the distraught girl who was her sister-in-law. Then they went to a Tyson office to get tickets for the theater. None were to be had for the Kemble performance at any price.

They were so tired by now that they were glad of it. They rode back to the apartment. There they found a day letter from Daphne's father to her mother.

As you see by papers big Cowper firm failed today for ten million dollars this hits us hard you better come home not buy anything more situation serious but hope for best don't worry well love.

WESLEY.

Mrs. Kip dropped into a chair. The shock was so great that it shook first from her a groan of sympathy for her husband.

"Your poor father! And he's worked so hard and been so careful."

Bayard came home late for dinner and in a state of grave excitement. The great Cowper wholesale establish-

ment had fallen like a steeple, crushing many a house. The collapse had shaken dull old Wall Street to the foundations and shattered the pathetic dreams of approaching prosperity. Indirectly it had rattled the windows of Bayard's firm; had stopped the banks from granting an important loan. Bayard spent a bad day down-town. He turned homeward at last, thanking God that he had a home and an inexhaustible wealth in his wife's love. The news of his father's distress was a heavy blow. But he tried to dispense encouragement to the three women who could not quite realize what all the excitement was about, or why the disaster of a big chain of wholesale stores should be of any particular importance to them.

Bayard was just saying: "I tell you, Leila honey, I was the wise boy when I grabbed you, for now I've got you, and I need you. We're going to win out, all right, but it takes so much cash and cash costs. Thank the Lord I'm not loaded up with debt. I've kept clear of that."

Leila said nothing, but thought hard. Bayard was silent. Later the door-bell rang and a young sewing-girl brought two big boxes from Dutilh's. They were so big that there was no concealing them. Leila made a timid effort to escape with hers, but Bayard was full of a cheerful curiosity:

"What's all that, honey?"

"Oh, it's just a—a little thing I picked up to-day at Dutilh's."

"Dutilh's, eh? If I'd known you had cash enough to call on him I'd have borrowed it myself. But now that it's bought let's see it. Is it becoming?"

"Daphne and your mother thought so."

"What is it, a scarf or something? Give a fellow a look at it."

He began to untie the knot. Sealed across the cord was an envelope, with a statement. Bayard tore it free.

Leila snatched at it. Bayard laughed and dodged her. Leila pursued. It was a ghastly game of tag for her, and Daphne and her mother looked on in guilty dread. Bayard, whooping with laughter, dashed into his room and closed the door, held it fast while Leila pounded and pleaded with him.

His laughter was quenched sharply. There was a silence. He opened the door and walked out, a sickly pallor at his lips, the statement in his hand:

"This can't be right, honey. 'Bayard Kip to Dutilh, Debtor. Peach-blow satin gown—two hundred and seventy-five dollars.' The price is ridiculous, and I have no account there."

"He—he insisted on my opening one."

"But I don't want to open any accounts. I pay my bills in thirty days or discount them for cash. I can't pay this in thirty days. Every penny I can see ahead of me is laid out."

"I—I'm sorry," Leila faltered.

There was a throbbing silence of suspense. He was deeply gentle, but anxious.

"Couldn't you have waited till you asked me? If you had to have it, couldn't you have given me a chance to arrange for it? Couldn't you have waited till I got home?"

Leila took courage from his meekness: "I suppose I could have. But I supposed you could afford it. Dutilh said I could pay whenever I liked."

"Agh!" Bayard gnarred. "That's the way it starts. Nobody ever paid a debt when he liked. You make the debt when you like; you pay when you don't like. But why couldn't you have waited—or telephoned me, or—you don't know how this frightens me, honey. Two hundred and seventy-five dollars for a piece of silken foolishness at a time like this! It would keep a family for a year."

"It will last me a year," she giggled, timidly.

He did not smile.

She pleaded: "You said the times were getting better."

"I thought they were. I hoped they were. But they've gone bad again. Besides, I was trying to cheer you up, to give you a happy honeymoon. And I bought you everything you saw abroad. And it wasn't enough! My God! when will you get enough clothes!"

Leila had stared incredulous at the calamitous result of her tender impulse to beautify herself in his eyes. Then tears came gushing and she ran to her room and locked the door.

Bayard did not follow her. He turned for comfort to his mother and Daphne. He noted the other box. Daphne had not dared to open it.

Bayard ripped the envelope from its cord and read:

"Bayard Kip to Dutilh, Dr. Parchment-toned gown, for Miss Daphne Kip, two hundred and seventy-five dollars."

He was parchment-toned himself as he shook the statement at Daphne, and whispered, huskily, "What's this?"

Daphne could not muster any courage. She explained with craven remorse, "I saw a gown that I—I needed there, and I—I— He offered to let it go on your account till I could get the money."

Bayard was choked with wrath and a terror greater than hers.

"I go to my office and work like a fiend all day, and I come home to find that my wife and my sister have run me into debt for—for five hundred and fifty dollars. And the firm, the big firm I work for, had to extend a note for seven hundred and fifty because we couldn't meet it!"

He paced the floor, wringing his hands and beating his hot forehead with the heels of his hands. His mother could not help him. She saw her husband again, as he was when he was younger. Wesley had these financial

frenzies then, too. In the course of years his protests had worn down to a sickly wail. But he had begun with these hurricanes. And yet he had never had his own way with his own money. Would Bayard ever have his?

He rounded on Daphne: "You say you charged this to me till you can get the money?"

She nodded.

"Where are you going to get it?"

She could not answer.

"From dad?"

Before she could nod yes, he said, "You read his telegram, didn't you?"

She was silent.

He sneered, "Or are you going to get it from Clay Wimburn?"

She did not answer this.

"Couldn't you wait till you married him before you bankrupted him?" He flung his hands high: "Good God! have you women no other ambition except to ruin the men that love you?"

Daphne blazed with ire at this, but what could she say? Her mother tried to stem the tide of Bayard's rage, to turn his wrath with a soft answer:

"I guess it's all my fault, honey. The dresses looked so pretty on the girls I urged them to take them. You ought to see how beautiful they are. Go put the dress on, Daphne, and let your brother see how sweet you look in it."

His mother only added herself to the guilty. Bayard flung his hands up again and laughed like a maniac, calling to some imaginary sardonic deity to share his ribald laughter:

"Sweet! She looks sweet in it! It's beautiful! And that justifies anything. Lord, what did you make 'em out of, these women!"

Mrs. Kip nudged Daphne and whispered, "Go on, put the dress on; let him see you in it."

She spoke with great canniness, but Daphne stared at her with derision, and edged away and spoke in a tone as biting as cold blue vitriol.

"Put it on, mother! Do you think I'd ever wear the thing? I'll send it back to-morrow morning at daybreak. And I'll never take a thing that any man pays for as long as I live."

Bayard roared at her over his shoulder: "You won't take anything that any man pays for, eh? What are you going to live on—air?"

She answered him, grimly, "There are several million women in this country earning their own living, and I'm going to be one of them."

His comment was a barking, "Hah!"

She tied the broken cord about the parchment-toned dress, and her heart seemed to bleed on the thongs. She was afraid to open the box and look at the exquisitely glistening, frothy gown inside, so frail a thing to have come down like an avalanche on this household.

She lugged the box away to her room. Bayard flung himself into a chair and listened to the cauldron of his own hateful thoughts. Gradually they ceased to bubble and stew. He could hear now the muffled beat of Leila's sorrow. He resisted it for a while, sneered at it, raged at it, and then at the cruelty of the world.

Then the beating of that little drum of sorrow began to call to him. The anger faded out of his mien and a look of pity took its place. He fought against surrender, and for diversion opened the dress-box and peered inside. The contents were swaddled in tissue-paper, and it made a distressing noise as he unfolded it. It disclosed a chaos of soft colors, tender and pleading as a visible music. He could not understand its design, but it seemed to him that it would be very beautiful on his beautiful Leila.

His mother, watching him, saw that he was very like his father. Neither his mother nor his sister liked him in this mood.

Leila's sobs had stopped now and Bayard listened for them anxiously. Perhaps she had died of grief. A lasso seemed to have caught him about the shoulders; it was dragging him to the door.

He went there at last, and listened. He heard a low whimpering, unendurably appealing. He tapped on the door and called through it.

"Leila, honey love, forgive me. I've seen the little gown. It's beautiful. You shall have it—and a dozen like it. Please forgive me and love me again. And I'll buy you anything you want. Please. Please don't keep me standing outside your door. Honey! Leila love!"

Daphne heard him and her bitterness was beyond words. She came out in the hall and could not forbear to taunt him as the Philistines taunted the captured Samson. She mocked him in his own words and his high-flung gestures.

"Lord, what did you make 'em out of, these men?"

He was too much abased to denounce her, and, the door opening, he slipped through to take refuge with his Leila.

A moment later the door-bell rang. Daphne checked the maid whose ears had been fascinatingly entertained, and told her that if the caller were Mr. Wimburn he was to wait outside in the hall. It was Mr. Wimburn and Daphne went out to him. He greeted her with the zest of a young lover. Daphne gave him a cold cheek to kiss, and then, pulling her engagement-ring from her finger, placed it in his hand.

"Wha—what's this, Daphne?" he stuttered.

"It's your ring. I'm giving it back. The engagement is off—indefinitely."

"For Heaven's sake, why? What have I done?"

"Nothing. Neither have I. But I'm going to do something."

"What are you going to do, Daphne?"

"I don't know—but something."

"Don't you love me any more?"

"Just as much as ever—more than ever. And I'll prove it, too."

"Prove it by putting the ring back on."

"No! I'll never wear it again, never!"

"Great Cæsar's ghost! Won't you please explain?"

"Not to-night. I'm too wild. You'd better go home. I'm dangerous."

"And you won't wear the ring?"

"Never! Send it back and save your money. That's what I'm going to do with what I've bought. Kiss me good night and go, please."

She left him outside and closed the door as lovingly as she could.

While Clay waited for the elevator to come up and take him down he stared at the ring with sheep's eyes, tossed it, and caught it awkwardly, and laughed and almost spoke his thought aloud:

"Funny thing. I haven't paid for it yet. Got an insulting letter from the jeweler, too, this very afternoon."

But Daphne was thumbing the telephone-book to see if she could find Tom Duane's number.

CHAPTER XVI

JILTED and jolted have no kinship in origin, but they arrive at the same conclusion. Clay Wimburn was both, and bewildered as well.

He did not realize how bewildered he was until he was out on the street and walking toward his bachelor lodgings. His engagement-ring had been returned to him, his marriage postponed indefinitely and abruptly after the bride-not-to-be had begun to compile her trousseau, and the wedding announcements had been ordered with the date neatly and ironically engraved in steel.

And the bride's one given reason for this jilt was that she loved her victim too well to marry him! The pavement under his feet seemed to misbehave like the comic sidewalks at Coney Island.

Clay could find no reason for Daphne's cruelty except the fact that she had had to walk several miles home on high-heeled shoes because he happened to lack cab fare. But this theory would accuse Daphne of being mercenary. And how could an angel be avaricious?

If he had known that at the very moment she was hunting for the telephone number of that endowed bachelor, Tom Duane, Clay would have been convinced that Daphne was not an angel at all, or at best a fallen one. He would have said that avarice was her ruling trait.

He could neither know nor suspect these things, however. He was sufficiently bankrupt of hope, as it was.

Daphne failed to run Duane to earth in the telephone-book. She was at a loss for another source of directions.

She was new to New York and did not know how to set out on such a pursuit. She could have learned from Bayard or Leila, but they were the last people on earth she wanted to take into her confidence.

She went to her room, and found her mother there, dismally engaged in writing a letter to her father, breaking to him the dreadful news that the trousseau was to cost far more for far less. She was asking for extra money at once. Mrs. Kip did not like the job. She felt as wretched as a reformed pirate compelled to toast the soles of a poor old, howling miser in order to compel him to divulge the hiding-place of his gold.

Daphne saw how perfectly her mother was not enjoying her task and asked her:

"What are you up to, mamma? Writing your last testament?"

Mrs. Kip groaned the explanation.

Daphne smiled bitterly and said: "Rub it out and do it over again, mamma. There ain't goin' to be no trousseau. No wedding-bells for me."

Mrs. Kip rolled large eyes in Daphne's direction and looked deaf. Daphne held out her denuded engagement-ring finger in proof that she and Clay were detrothed.

"Good gracious!" was Mrs. Kip's profane comment. "What under the living sun did you find out about him?"

There was almost an eagerness in her curiosity. We all love to see our heroes reduced to common terms.

Daphne smiled rebukingly. "Nothing, except that he's the dearest boy on earth."

"Then why on earth did you—"

"Because I'm too expensive for him."

"What are you going to do—go back to Cleveland and tell everybody that you're not going to get married, after all this trouble?"

"No, I'm not going back to Cleveland, and I am going to get married—but later, much later."

"I hate conundrums," said Mrs. Kip. "Better tell

me the answer, for I won't guess. What are you going to do?"

"I'm going to lend a hand," said Daphne. "Do my share. Get a job and earn my board and keep."

"Heaven help us! You've gone crazy!" Mrs. Kip exclaimed. "You come right home with me and let your father talk to you."

"And I'm not going to lean on daddy any more, either." Daphne spoke with fine dramatic energy, but Mrs. Kip clucked over her like an old hen.

"I guess this trousseau business has kind of affected your mind. You get to bed and you'll feel better in the morning. I'll finish my letter."

She added, unbeknownst to Daphne, a postscript as long as the letter, contradicting all she had just written and urging her husband to come East at once and take charge of his unruly daughter. She dropped it in the mail-chute, and it fell into a bottomless pit, along with her other hopes.

Daphne got to bed. And she felt better in the morning, but not because she had returned to her former mind. She woke early and watched the sun roll up the curtain of the big shop. She gazed down at the gradual change of the street life as the tide of the populace turned from the ebb and began to flood back to the day's work. She wanted to join that army. She wanted to have work to do. She wanted to have dealings with life, meet money on its own ground, and earn what she spent.

She was awake too soon. Only the humbler laborers were at large, the scouts and pioneers of the vanguard—the scrubwomen, office-openers, sawdust-sprinklers, and sidewalk-sweepers. She grew impatient at the delay of the world to get up with her. The milk had not been set on the dumb-waiter. The morning paper had not been brought up to the door, the night elevator-boy was asleep on a marble bench in the hall. The mail-carriers had not begun to scatter their largesses about the town.

It would be hours before important New York was set going. It was only being wound up now.

Daphne was ready. It was the opportunity that was unready. The early bird was too early for the early worm, and shivered on the lonely branch. Finding herself premature, she lost her enthusiasm and grew drowsy again.

She began to nod lower and lower and at length her brow reached the backs of her idle hands clasped on the ledge. Her mother, waking two hours later, missed her from her place in the bed and, sitting up bulkily, made her out where she slept at the window-sill, her slumber undisturbed by the noise of the town braying like a brass band at full blast below. The forenoon breeze swirled her loose hair humorously about her ambitious little head and the creamy surface of her nape and shoulders gave no hint of the burdens she wanted to assume.

Mrs. Kip rolled out and wrapped the chilled lithe figure in a warm robe and tried to drag her back to bed. But Daphne woke and remembered, and thought with remorse of how sleep had betrayed her.

She renewed her vows to conquer the world, and caroled while the bath-tub filled.

CHAPTER XVII

DAPHNE and her mother were uneasy at the prospect of the breakfast encounter with the bridal couple. There had been a sense of strain the first morning. But now a bitter quarrel had intervened—that first ugly quarrel when the wedge of finance is driven between united hearts.

Bayard and Leila, however, arrived at the table all smiles, more amorous than ever. Instead of showing an impatient thirst for the morning news Bayard left the papers folded. He conducted Leila to her chair as if she were a fragile invalid and fetched her a cushion and fitted it into her back and kissed her on the top of her head. And when he departed for the long voyage to the other side of the table she called him back for a passionate embrace.

She was his newspaper now, and he scanned the headlines of her brows with anxious, almost with suppliant, interest.

Leila wore a triumphant smile, such as Delilah must have worn the second time she went out walking with her big beau.

It was plain to the anxious eyes of Mrs. Kip and Daphne that Leila had emerged from the quarrel with all the loot and aggravated power.

She had taken advantage of her husband's trust and abused his generosity recklessly, with no more evil motive, indeed, than the wish to beautify herself in his honor, and yet with recklessness.

He had made an uproar, then subsided into a beggar

for her forgiveness. She had graciously pardoned him and consented to renew his privilege of tribute. The idol had accepted the worshiper back again, granted her altar to his sacrifices of contrition, and admitted to her nostrils the savory smoke of his burnt money.

It was not altogether Leila's fault if the lesson she learned, perhaps unconsciously, from the combat was something like this:

"I ran my husband into debt without consulting him. His listless love woke from its torpor and enchanted me with a first-class demonstration of its energy. He stormed. I wept thrillingly. He apologized, begged to be permitted to bring me some more nice things. Ergo, when home life grows dull, I can always stir up the fire by buying something we can't afford. When I want anything I must get it. I shall be scolded, then kissed and treated with awe. If I hadn't bought it I wouldn't have had it, nor the bonus that goes with it. If we had not quarreled we should have missed the rapture of 'making up.'"

This is one of the first lessons that certain sorts of husbands teach to certain sorts of wives.

After the breakfast was set going with the usual ritual of "How many lumps in your coffee? Cream?" and the like, Leila beamed on Daphne.

"It's all fixed up, dear. Bayard has eaten crow for his little outburst last night and he thinks my Dutilh gown is stunning, so I'm going to keep it. And you are to keep yours."

"No, thanks," said Daphne. "It goes back to-day."

Bayard interposed. "You're going to keep it, honey, and you owe it to Leila."

Daphne winced at this last and at the conquered deprecation of Bayard's manner. He groveled deeper still. "I was a brute last night and I'm ashamed of myself. I want you all to come down to luncheon with me to-day

and we'll have a love-feast and I'll buy you each a little present as a peace offering."

"Sorry, but I'll be busy," said Daphne. "I've got to get a job and a place to live."

"A jo-ob!" Bayard gasped.

"A place to live?" Leila gasped, then added, with a noble effort at hospitality, "You are to live here, of course."

But Daphne shook her head. "I couldn't ruin your honeymoon any farther and I couldn't afford to live in such a costly apartment. I'm going to find something simple and cheap."

"Is mother going to live with you?" said Bayard.

"Of course not; she's going back to Cleveland. She's pining away for papa."

Mrs. Kip's objurgation "The idea!" was drowned in Bayard's demur, "But you can't go about alone here—not in New York!"

"Why not? Millions do."

"Oh, shopping and to the matinée, yes. But you can't live alone. Who's going to chaperon you?"

"I'm not going to have any chaperon," Daphne avowed. "I'm going in business. A business woman can't start out with a guardian. I don't see you taking Leila with you on all your business calls for fear some woman might steal you!"

"What sort of business you going in for?" Bayard demanded, ignoring her satire.

"I don't know yet," said Daphne. "I've got to look around. I wish I'd been taught a trade. I think every girl ought to be taught a trade."

"It's not necessary to teach her her trade of upsetting men and business," said Bayard.

He heaped up difficulties and objections. Daphne met them all with airy confidence. At length Bayard surrendered.

"Well, I suppose you've got to have your fling, and no-

body can stop you. But you'll find it mighty hard to get anything to do in this town. There are three hundred thousand people out of a job now—regular workers, trained workers. What chance have you?"

The number was so large that Daphne could not feel it. She answered, glibly:

"There's always room for one more—especially at the top. Dad will have to support me while I find my place, but there must be a place for me somewhere. There must be! And I'm going to find it!"

She saw that Bayard was winking to Leila. She flushed at the affectionate contempt implied. But she took new courage from discouragement, as youth and inexperience are apt to do.

And now Daphne's mother had learned the answer to the last night's riddle. With all the indignation possible to any old-fashioned woman she opposed the step. She turned to her son to save her from her daughter.

"Bayard, I wish you'd make her give up this insane idea. You know how dangerous it is."

"I know, mother, but it's no use. Daphne always would have her own way. Remember how she insisted on putting her finger on the red-hot stove as a little kid, in spite of all you could say or do to keep her from it? Well, she'll not be happy till she burns her fingers again."

"I may burn my fingers, but I won't let go," said Daphne, and she thought of how she would remind him of his words of discouragement on the not-far-distant day when she should be a great actress, earning her fifty thousand dollars a year. For she had decided that she would be a great actress and earn at least that.

Bayard felt so confident of her failure that he could afford to be merciful. "If I can help you in any way, let me know," he said. "It's pretty nasty for a young girl wandering round this old town. You'll bump into some tough characters, and you'll be glad to have a home to go back to. That's where a woman belongs. But I don't

care what you tackle so long as you're not fool enough to try to go on the stage. I won't stand for that!"

Daphne said nothing, and said it with a kind of noisy silence. Bayard suspected nothing. Leila and Mrs. Kip, however, both saw at once from Daphne's expression that the stage was the one thing she had in mind. Neither of them spoke, lest Bayard be moved to an outbreak.

He smiled tolerantly at Daphne and gave her a tolerant kiss on her flushed cheek. He kissed his mother and patted her on the back and smiled to reassure her. He kissed Leila many times and madly.

When the man of the house had achieved this separation and departed for his office, and the waiter had carried off the breakfast relics, the three women were left alone in a completely feminine conclave. They faced life like three Norns: the old mother, the new wife, and the deferred wife, each from her coign of disadvantage.

The two married women turned on the maid, with common resentment at her criticism of their establishments. They were married and dependent and she had her independence. They were Tories and she a Whig. It was their privilege to rail at things as they were, but it was their religion to frown on changing them. Mrs. Kip senior spoke for Mrs. Kip junior.

"Now, Daphne, tell us what is this new foolishness all about?"

Daphne answered, stoutly: "It's not foolishness. It's the first glimmer of sense I've ever had. I'm sick of the idea of always living on the money of some man, taking his charity or his extravagance. I've always been a drag on poor daddy, and I was getting ready to shift my weight over to poor Clay's back. But I don't think a woman ought to be dependent on a man. I think she ought to bear her share of the burden."

"As if she didn't!" Mrs. Kip broke out. "As if the home weren't just as much labor as the office."

"But it isn't, mamma, and you know it. It may have been once, but nowadays there's nothing left for the wife to do. Her servants or the machines do everything for her. And her husband pays for the servants and the machines. I don't think it's fair. I think the wife ought to work just as much as the husband does. The work would keep her out of mischief and keep her happier, and the money would give the husband help and leisure."

Daphne's proposal was about as popular as a motion to unwater the stock would be at a directors' meeting. It had a sacrilegious note like a proposal at a vestry meeting that a church should pay taxes on its property. Mrs. Kip shook her head in terror of this changeling of hers.

Leila attacked her from another direction. "For goodness' sake, Daphne, don't lose your head. Don't you imagine for a moment that a husband will be happier and love his wife better because she earns wages. The harder you work for men, the better they like somebody else. The harder a man works for you the better he likes you. Best of all, he loves the woman that tries to break him."

Daphne's answer was a snappy: "I don't believe it! I'd despise a man that felt that way."

Leila had the wisdom of the harem, the sultana craft that enslaves the master by submission, holds him prisoner while embracing his knees and praying for mercy. Mrs. Kip had the wisdom of the American household, the despotism of the good woman who shackles her husband with indignant virtues, and whacks his head with a precept whenever he lifts it up in pride.

Daphne had the wisdom of the newest school that asks for comradeship, and a complementary equality, and, demanding freedom, offers it as a fair exchange.

All three schools have their successes and their disasters. Daphne had seen the defects of the older two only.

The three women wrangled with wise saws and modern instances, and they were in a perilous state of dissension

when the telephone rang. Leila answered it and her outcries of indignation alarmed Mrs. Kip and Daphne till they learned the cause.

Bayard had called up to say that the luncheon party must be postponed. Outrageous business had made another insidious attack on love.

Leila came from the telephone in a state of desperation mitigated by the fact that Bayard had asked her to take his mother and Daphne shopping and buy them and herself something worth while as an atonement for his abandonment.

Mrs. Kip and Daphne protested that they wanted nothing, but Leila insisted that it was only fair that Bayard should pay for his neglect. It was only fair that he should buy his mother something handsome.

There was such a lilt of joy in her generosity that it seemed cruel to check it, even though it was vicarious.

So they set forth again on another onset against the ramparts of beauty.

They wove their way from department store to department store, from Sterns' to Lord & Taylor's, from McCreery's to Altman's and Wanamaker's. It was like wandering from garden to garden of roses—roses that could be worn.

Their salvation was the embarrassment of merchandise, the confusion of choice. The rescue from each tempting thing was the imagination of something yet better further on. Nevertheless, to the silent horror of Daphne and her mother, Leila was persuaded to buy a new coat and a new hat and to pay for them by the convenience of opening two new accounts at the suggestion of two soapy salesmen. Bayard's surrender after his first battle had already accomplished the expectable result.

Irresistible wares in the windows dragged them inside to ask for details, and once inside they were surrounded with new allurements. They scattered here and there

and beckoned to one another like children out blackberrying.

Everything was the very latest thing and yet was marked down. But Daphne priced things now with a new soul. She was thinking in the terms of wages and toil.

She was going to earn fifty thousand a year some day, but she supposed that at first she would earn very little—twenty-five dollars a week, perhaps.

When then she saw an "extremely smart" summer dress of sheer voile and cotton ratine at a "special summer price" of twenty-five dollars, she no longer thought of it as a nominal sum to be wheedled from her father. She thought of it as a whole week's work in the theater, six night performances and two matinées. A captivating "ripple coat" in gabardine or serge no longer meant "only fifty dollars"—it meant a fortnight's entire receipts.

For the first time in her existence she vividly understood how all these fairy tissues were the products of human labor, paid for with wages and to be sold for other wages. Pearls were drops of sweat; perfumes were the sighs of weary men; soft fabrics were the hard spinning of human silkworms.

Bayard was even now racking his brain to accumulate what three women were squandering.

Suddenly the throngs in the aisles took on a strange aspect. These were not nice women innocently shopping; they were devastating caterpillars and wasps, gorgeous, but repulsive, destroying the leaves and petals and fruits that gardeners had brought to perfection by grubbing in the hard soil and by incessant cultivation.

There were hardly any men among the multitude, and they looked captive and reluctant. The men were elsewhere at work. And millions of women were at work in offices and factories and tenements preparing the crops for these locusts to destroy.

She had heard the phrase "unproductive consump-

tion." It was a favorite protest of her father in his quarrels against her mother's expenditures. She had never understood it till now.

Fortunes were being lavished here by these women on things that were perishable and unproductive to the last extent.

According to the canonical explanation Eve had torn a branch of fig-leaves from a tree and wreathed it about her productive loins. Adam and she had learned to make coats of animal pelts when they went out into the rest of the world. But here were great warehouses packed with coverings that neither concealed nor warmed. Daphne herself was as guilty as the rest.

While she waited for a cynical saleswoman to find a color to suit her mother's contradictory desire to look rich for nothing, Daphne began to enumerate her own garments. Counting her gloves, her hat, and her shoes, her hand-bag and veil, she wore fifteen separate habiliments and she must take these off and put them on and shift from one set to another once or twice or oftener every day. That seemed to be her chief industry.

And besides these things there was the appalling matter of her coiffure, numberless toilsome ways of arranging her hair; pins for it, and combs, and ribbons, and tiaras. And for her throat there were necklaces, and bracelets for her wrists, and rings for her fingers, and brooches, chains, and ribbons, sashes and vanity-boxes, and what not? There were boas and plumes, and there was the elaborate machinery of the dressing-table.

What other business on earth had women besides dressing and undressing and buying dressings? They ate in order to have strength for these tasks, and they made love in order to find husbands who would capitalize their trade. They no longer manufactured anything—a little fancy stitching and mending hardly counted. Buying and wearing clothes was their career.

The churches were empty, and sparsely filled of a

Sunday; the free art-galleries were deserted; the public library was neglected. But the shops, the magnificent temples of extravagance, were crowded with fanatic worshipers spilling out gold and far-fetched fruits of toil on altars that returned only smoke.

So Daphne meditated as she had never meditated before and might not often meditate again. Glistening weaves and things that are gentle and fragrant and, above all, new, will forever have their own logic and their own compulsion and she would not long escape them.

At the moment, however, Daphne was filled with contempt for her sex in its most characteristic enthusiasm. She wondered why the nagged and besieged shop-girls were not more impatient than they were. She felt that theirs was the less ignoble part in the traffic. They at least were earning something. Daphne renewed her vow to be an earner.

She refused to buy a thing. Her mother could only explain her mood as a symptom of an illness and advise her to get home to bed. There was something suspicious in the condition of a girl who could look with qualms of conscience or appetite on such a banquet.

At length fatigue and faintness reminded Mrs. Kip, senior, that she had not eaten and the hour was late. She called for her luncheon and they went together to a tea-room. Here Daphne had another attack of eccentricity; a stubborn determination to go home and send back to Dutilh the wicked gown that she had bought of him on credit.

She had left the house without returning it and she was afraid that there would be difficulties if she delayed. Fortunately there had been no alterations in the gown.

Mrs. Kip and Leila wrangled with her in vain. She did not listen, but she began to scrawl figures on the wrapping-paper of a parcel with a bit of pencil. At length she made the enigmatic statement:

"That silly little frock cost two hundred and seventy-five dollars. At twenty-five dollars a week that means eleven weeks—nearly three months!—of hard work or eighty-eight performances, with nothing left over for food or lodging."

"She's gone crazy," cried Mrs. Kip, not knowing what she was thinking of.

Leila, misunderstanding almost as completely, objected: "But Bayard makes far more than twenty-five dollars a week and he has a stack of stocks and bonds just rotting away in a safe-deposit vault."

"I wasn't thinking of Bayard," said Daphne, but would explain no further, though they quizzed at her all the way home.

Her mother was genuinely alarmed about her. She saw all the symptoms of a fever with attendant delirium. She was encouraged by the signs of self-struggle when Daphne got out the Dutilh dress for a farewell view, caressed it, laid it across her body, and looked down along herself, and marched in front of the full-length mirror in a closet door.

Mrs. Kip unconsciously paraphrased Tennyson's doleful lyric when she thought, "She must weep or she will die."

And at length the wholesome human tears came from the squeezed eyelids. Mrs. Kip laughed with relief as she sprang forward, proffering a handkerchief:

"Don't cry on that dress, for Heaven's sake, or you can neither wear it nor return it."

Daphne held the gown out of the reach of distilled salt water and sighed with hopeful despair. "I wonder if Dutilh will take it back?"

Leila winked at Mrs. Kip and said: "Not unless you buy something else in its place. Dressmakers are awfully suspicious. So many women order a gown sent home and wear it to some affair and then return it. Of course Dutilh, knowing me, would doubtless give you another dress to take its place, but—"

"There never could be another to take its place," Daphne groaned, feeling the heroism slipping out of her system.

Leila pressed her advantage. "Besides, it's just the thing to wear to the tea this afternoon."

"I wanted it for my trousseau."

"But you're not getting married, you said."

"Not for an awfully long time."

"Better keep the frock, then," Leila teased.

Perhaps there is no form that Satan takes oftener than that of a fashionable gown. In that shape he offers women the conquest of the world. But Daphne resisted him and said to Leila: "Get thee behind me, Satan! I'm going to return this gown and let Dutilh give Bayard credit for it. I won't look at another gown till I can pay for it out of my own earnings. I'll not get married till I can buy the rest of my trousseau myself. I've decided that an independent woman must buy her own trousseau."

Even in the eyes of ambition this promised to require a fairly long period—a period so lengthy that she wondered if Clay's love would outlast it.

She did love him and the thought of losing him alarmed her more than the thought of losing the precious gown.

She wondered if she would not better reconsider her determination. Perhaps it was her duty to the poor boy to marry him at once. He had longed for her, had languished without her, had rejoiced at the approach of their union. The return of the ring had shocked him horribly. He might do something desperate. He might kill himself. He might already be dead. There was a kind of joyous frightfulness about this possibility; it would be so eloquent a proof of love. But she really must not imperil his life.

She must send for him to call again that very evening. But before she could move, the thought came to her that if he really loved her he would refuse to accept her first rebuff. He would force his way back to her, storm the

lofty citadel of the apartment-house, and demand at least an explanation. She would wait for that test. It was the part of maidenly modesty. Even a business woman must retain her maidenly modesty.

All these things she had pondered while she stood staring at the frock.

Leila woke her from her meditation with a sudden "Come along; we must dress for the tea-fight."

Mrs. Kip, senior, amused the younger Kips by thinking aloud: "I wonder if that nice Mr. Duane will be at the tea."

"Oh! shamie shame!" cried Leila. "It's a regular intrigue. No, he won't be there. Telephone him at the Racquet Club and he'll come to you. He's usually there."

She did not see the start the careless hint gave Daphne, who had learned by accident what she had not known how to find out otherwise. Daphne concealed her agitation in the briskness with which she concluded the affair of the Dutilh gown. She folded it up and laid it back in the box as if it were a baby she was about to leave on a doorstep. She kissed it good-by and put the lid over it and tied it up with a crazy combination of strings of various sorts.

She refused to go to the tea-party, now that the gown was lost, and she said she had letters to write.

But when her mother and Leila had left her she wrote only one letter—a note of regretful rejection to Dutilh. She pinned it to the box and sent it off by a messenger. Then she telephoned to Tom Duane.

She did not quite realize the temerity of calling a man up at his club, and Tom Duane misunderstood her, imputed her innocence to its opposite. He remembered her as a pretty thing. If she were brazen—well, he liked brass in certain forms. When she said that she wanted to have a serious talk with him at his convenience, he made it the immediate moment at the cost of breaking an engagement at tennis.

He asked her if she would not meet him somewhere for tea, but she said that she preferred to see him at her brother's apartment. His invitation aroused her suspicion. Her invitation confirmed his.

Daphne's heart was beating excitedly while she waited for him and she began to feel that she had put herself in a wrong light. When Duane arrived and the maid showed him into the living-room Daphne tried to redeem herself by a business-like directness. She wasted no time on small talk, but charged at once upon her purpose:

"Mr. Duane, you must think it very peculiar of me to drag you up here."

"I think it's mighty kind of you."

"You say that before you hear what I'm going to ask you. I'm going to ask you to do me a tremendous favor."

"That will be doing me a tremendous favor," he said, with a welcoming eagerness.

Then she amazed him with her request: "You offered yesterday—of course I know you didn't mean it—but you offered to get me a job with a theatrical manager."

Duane's hospitable smile hardened into a grimace of anxiety. He mumbled, "Oh yes."

"You know Mr. Raven—or whatever his name is—very well, don't you?"

"Mr. Reben—oh yes—yes, I know him fairly well."

Daphne noted the qualification. We know so many people so well until we are asked to introduce somebody to them, then not quite so well. Daphne offered Duane an escape.

"I won't hold you to it if you want to back out."

He responded handsomely. "But I don't want to back out. If you want to meet Mr. Reben, I'd be doing him a kindness in letting him have the first bid on you. In fact, up at Claremont he asked me who you were. He said you were a—a corker. That's high praise for old Reben. He's seen so many beauties. And he was with Miss Kemble at the time."

Daphne trembled with encouragement. Approbation from Reben was approbation indeed.

"I'm awfully glad if he liked me, because I want some of his money. I want to go on the stage."

"But I thought your sister said you were engaged to Clay Wimburn."

"I was, but—"

"Really! Well, well! Poor Wimburn. What has he been up to?"

"Nothing to his discredit, Mr. Duane!" She said it with a loyal defiance. "The trouble is that I have an ambition—"

"An ambition to shine among the stars—thrill great throngs and all that sort of thing, eh?"

"No, just an ambition to earn the money I spend."

"Really! You are as modern as your clothes."

"Thank you. And would you dare introduce me to Mr. Reben?"

"Indeed I will, and proud to do it."

"Do you think he'll give me a—a job?"

"I'll make him."

"How can I ever repay you?"

Her hand went out to him and he took it and squeezed it, and it squeezed back gratefully. But he did not let go. Duane seemed to be excited suddenly.

Daphne drew her hand back, but his came with it, and he followed close upon. There was a look in his eyes that made her uneasy. His voice was uncertain as he said:

"You can repay me easily enough, if you want to."

"I do. But how? How?" she asked, anxiously, not quite daring to wrench her hand free.

"By—by being—by being kind to me."

"Kind? How?"

He did not answer with words, but he lifted her hand with both of his to his lips. It was an act of old-fangled gallantry that could hardly be resented. But, manlike,

having made a formal surrender, he tried to take command. One hand held hers, the other swept round her shoulders and pressed her against him, without roughness, yet with strength. His lips moved now, not toward her hand, but toward the sacredness of her mouth.

CHAPTER XVIII

DAPHNE bent her head so quickly that his pressed lips touched her hair. She flung backward and thrust him away and broke from his hold.

"Agh!" she groaned. "I suppose I deserve the insult—for trusting you."

"I didn't intend it for an insult." He followed her with pleading arms.

She backed away and found herself in a corner, flushed and furious, at bay.

"How dare you?" she stormed, and thought with nausea how often the phrase had been used and with what hypocrisy.

It seemed to fall familiarly on his ear, for he laughed comfortably. "How can I help it?"

"If you touch me I'll—I'll hit you."

He paused, stared deep into her eyes. "Do you mean it?"

"Of course I mean it."

"You don't always, you know. You don't always mean it."

She looked puzzled.

"I'm speaking of your sex in general whan I say you. Perhaps you've heard the phrase, 'A woman's No means Yes.'"

She answered his light satire with a fierce vigor: "My No means No to you, Mr. Duane!"

"I'm sorry," he sighed. "But won't you let me explain?"

"You don't have to. It's all my fault for inviting you here."

"Oh no, I beg you not to think that I'm such a cad."

"Please go!"

"All right!" he murmured, and left the room.

She heard his stick rattle as he took it from the umbrella-jar. She thought: "There goes my opportunity—my career! Well, let it go! It wasn't worth the price!"

Duane appeared at the door again to say: "Oh, by the way, that introduction to Mr. Reben. Do you still want it?"

"No, thank you, not from you. Good-by."

He bowed farewell, then changed his mind, entered the room and sat down, and motioned her to a seat as if it were his house.

"Miss Kip, may I say one word to you? I don't pretend to understand you women people. I'm not sure now just now sincere you are, just how much of a ninny you may think me for being rebuffed so easily."

"So easily!" she gasped.

"I didn't put up much of a fight, now, did I? You didn't have to scream for help, did you? One of the hardest things a man has to encounter, Miss Kip, is the insincerity of you women—of so many of you at least. The sincere ones have to suffer for the insincere. I've no doubt—that is, I have a doubt, but I'm willing to assume—that you really don't want me to kiss you. I don't see why you should; but so many women take kisses from such queer men that—well, a man never knows. Experience is no guide. But—well—anyway—what I wanted to say is this—there is hardly any man that would even bother a woman unwilling to be bothered if he could only be certain that he was really bothering her. Do I make myself clear?"

"Not in the least."

"Well, then, I give up. But I must leave you a bit of advice. You say you want to earn money. If you do,

on the stage or in any other business, you will meet a lot of men who will feel it their duty to try to kiss you at the first opportunity. It's not only because you are so pretty, for I really believe the homeliest girls get the most kisses. Perhaps it's because they're not so particular—but, anyway, it's not because men are villains that they try to kiss women, but because they're obliging. It's their instinct to provide the helpless creatures with any little luxuries they may want—jewels, candies, flowers, dresses, kisses—anything. Most men are stodgy, timid, and deadly respectable, and dismally interested in their work. But there is an old superstition —I don't know how false it is, or how true; no man ever can know—but there is a tradition that every woman expects every man she meets to offer her an insult—that's the technical term—as soon as they are alone.

"He doesn't always make the offer, for there are just as many honorable men as there are women. Every Mrs. Potiphar will find a lot of Josephs if she looks around.

"That feeling, however, is what women are going to run into every time they try to force their way into business. It will die out, I suppose, to a certain extent, as you crowd into our field. It will be one of the last privileges you'll lose. You're already permitted to stand up in the street-cars and go out after dark alone. By and by you will have to make your advances to the men yourselves in the frankest manner, instead of subtly as now."

Daphne broke in, coldly, "That will be a very welcome day to most of us."

Somehow it did not sound convincing to her. There was grave conviction, however, in his response:

"It will be a mighty welcome day to us poor men, Miss Kip. For most men haven't the faintest desire to spoon with women. It's hard enough for some of them to keep their own sweethearts and wives sufficiently caressed. We're lazy, and we hate to give up our seats and lift our hats and bow and scrape. We do those things because

we're expected to. We hate to go to war, but we do it rather than be pointed at.

"Then there's another thing—if I'm not boring you—I haven't made as long a speech since I was a schoolboy and recited 'Spartacus to the Gladiators.'"

"Go on, please," said Daphne. "A woman doesn't often get the chance of hearing a man tell the truth about these things."

Her sarcasm chilled him a little, but he went on:

"I just want to say this—it's an old man's advice to a young woman going into business: when a man asks for a job he brings references, and they are investigated; or he answers a lot of questions, and he is given a trial. Or when two men meet in a club or elsewhere they shake hands. That handshake itself is a kind of investigation of character. They learn each other's politics and religion and prejudices as soon as they can.

"So when a man meets a woman he is apt to be thrown with a good deal he is apt to say, 'What sort is she?' If she's a bookkeeper or stenographer, he wants to know if she can spell and punctuate and add two and two and be trusted with the petty cash. Also, he wants to know if she expects him to flirt with her. He usually hopes to Heaven that she doesn't—though, of course, there are all sorts of men, just as there are all sorts of women, and all sorts of men and women have all the other sorts of moods. But the thing that annoys a man most about having to do business with a woman is the fear that he will either compromise her or disappoint her. That's the first problem to get out of the way; and there's nothing easier for a woman to do than to convince a man that she doesn't want him to try to flirt with her—if she doesn't."

Daphne cried, "In Heaven's name, tell me how it's done."

"The way to convince him is to be convinced yourself. If you're sincere he'll know it."

"But I was sincere with you, and you didn't know it."

"I didn't know it at first, but I soon did—I think—and now that's what I'm driving at all this long while. If you're going into business competition with men, play fair. Every now and then one of them, as soon as he finds himself alone with you, will be polite enough to insult you. Some men, of course, wouldn't bother you if you were cast on a desert island together, and others would grab you in a crowd. But the average man will let you alone if you'll let him alone. Suppose he does make a mistaken advance, if you could be sensible enough not to get mad, not to feel besmirched, but just take it as a matter of course and say, frankly: 'No, thanks, I'm not interested. I understand you perfectly, but you needn't bother,' or something like that, and say it honestly, the rest would be plain sailing.

"Some of the best, squarest friendships in the world have started with a little wrestling like ours, or with a slap in the face, and an honest apology. But it needn't go so far as that if the girl is sensible and square. Do you understand me?"

"I think I do. It seems a pity, though, that a woman has to be so misunderstood."

"Oh, nearly everything is a pity, and the men are misunderstood, too. Most men mean well toward women. Most men are more interested in their work than in all the flirtations in the world. Perhaps the day will come when women are so numerous in business that a man would no more think of trying to flirt with one than he would try to kiss every darky elevator-boy he meets. But we haven't got that far yet."

There was a silent period of meditation on the all-important social philosophies he had expounded, and then he said:

"And now, if you'll forgive me for talking your arm off and if you'll prove it by letting me help you, I'll promise never to kiss you or try to till—till you ask me to."

Daphne laughed refreshedly at his impudence, and he

laughed as well as he might. And they shook hands with comradeship.

"And may I arrange for you to meet Reben?"

"I hate to ask you now. I've no right to trouble you. But I'm terribly anxious to get a job."

"And I'm terribly anxious to get you one."

"You're an awfully nice man and I—I—"

He paused, with a look of mock alarm. "You're not going to ask me already?"

His buffoonery amused her. She shook her head reassuringly and bade him good-by. But still he did not go. He lingered to say: "If you're expecting to see Reben, the sooner the better. He might have a job this morning that would be gone this afternoon. Let me telephone him from here."

"You're awfully kind," she said, and led him to the telephone.

She felt that it would be indelicate to listen, and went back into the living-room of the apartment. There Duane joined her in a few moments with the terrifying news that Reben had said that he might have a chance to place her at once if she would come to his office without delay.

Opportunity bouncing out at her like a jack-in-the-box alarmed her. But she faced it pluckily. She put on her hat with trembling hands and went down in the elevator with Duane.

The doorman checked a passing taxicab and Duane helped her in. She was so exquisite and anachronistic as a seeker after adventure that he wished he had not promised to keep his hands off. But he respected the troth, and reached the theater with his honor safe.

Daphne had no thought of philandering. Her flirtation was with her great career, and she was utterly afraid of it.

They went up in an elevator at one side of the lobby of the theater and stepped out at Reben's office door. A number of somber and despondent persons of a theatrical

complexion were waiting there also, the wretched Lazaruses of art.

Duane spoke to a respectful office-boy who disappeared through a door and returned to beckon him in. With heart bounding high and bubbling at her throat, Daphne entered the theatrical world by one of its most gilded portals.

CHAPTER XIX

THE great Reben sat bulkily behind an ornate table-desk, and dismissed a still more ornate stenographer with a nod as he rose to greet Duane.

Duane did the honors: "Mr. Reben, I want to present you to Miss Kip, Miss Daphne Kip."

Reben greeted her with suavity and his eyes were even more enthusiastic than his words. Daphne was at her superlative degree and anxiety gave her a wistfulness that was appealing to Reben. Women's charms and wistfulnesses made up a large part of his wares in trade.

"It is a pleasure to meet any of Mr. Duane's friends," Reben was saying in a thick, syrupy tone. "For he is the true friend of the theater. He does not act, or manage, or write criticisms; he does not sell us paper or advertising or false hair. He buys tickets, and he tells his friends what he likes. He is Mr. Audience. And he tells me you are Miss Audience."

Duane had told him more than that, but it was good business to make Daphne speak her message in her own words. It put her at a more suppliant disadvantage. So now she said, timidly enough:

"But I want to quit being audience and cross over to your side of the footlights."

"Oh, indeed!" said Reben. "But where shall we be if all the audiences come around to the back door? what audiences, that is, that the moving pictures have left us. Have you had any experience?"

"None."

"Studied elocution?"

"Never. I never spoke a piece in my life."

"Good! Amateur theatricals?"

"Never. I never seemed to care for them."

"Better yet! What makes you think you want to act now?"

"Money. I want to earn money—get rich."

"It's a relief to hear you omit art-talk, anyway. Well, you've come to the right place for money; all actresses get rich. What sort of parts do you prefer?"

"The ones that pay the best."

"Those parts pay best that suit personality best."

"Oh, I have no personality. I have good health; that's about all. I don't think I should care for tragedy. I'll leave Lady Macbeth and Tosca to taller people. What I like best is modern comedy with a little pathos and some excitement, and nice clothes and a touch of romance with a happy ending."

"A play like Miss Kemble's, for instance?"

"Exactly. It's my ideal of a play, and Miss Kemble is my ideal of an actress."

"I see," said Reben, and fell into a profound meditation, studying Daphne searchingly.

Duane seized the opportunity to rise and say: "Well, I'll leave you two together to talk terms. It would be indelicate for me to know just how rich Miss Kip is going to be."

He had no sooner gone than Reben's manner changed slightly, and Daphne's courage vanished. Reben paced the floor as he talked. His path kept slowly closing in around her like the walls in Poe's story.

"You look like Miss Kemble," he said. "You have somewhat the same temperament. You like her style of play. That may be your line. I can't tell. Of course I don't know how well you can act. Perhaps you never could. Kemble is great, but she comes of an old theatrical family. She was born on the stage. She has acted more or less since she was a baby. It is not easy to act. I

have seen nice, intelligent girls—not so pretty as you, of course, but pretty—faint away with excitement at having to say 'A letter for you, miss.' You don't look hysterical. You look self-reliant. And you might succeed. Of course you have one great capital—your beauty; for you are very beautiful, Miss Kip, very. Let me see your eyes!"

He had a right to ask, if he were going to hire her eyes, but she looked up cravenly, for the burly satrap was leaning over her. His left hand was on the arm of the chair, his right on the back of it. His left hand was gradually enveloping hers. It was a fat, hot hand, and his face was so close that it was blurred in her vision.

Her first impulse was to shudder away and strike out or cry out, to run from the room or leap from the window. Then she remembered Duane's words. She controlled herself enough to put them to the test.

She pretended to look coldly into Reben's face, and she said, with a brave show of calm: "Mr. Reben, I didn't come here to flirt with you and I don't intend to. I came here for a job as an actress. If this sort of thing is a necessary part of the job I'll go somewhere else."

Reben backed away and stared at her. He was rendered foolish by her rebuff, and he stammered, "Why I—I meant no harm."

She went on with the Duane system of treatment: "I know you didn't. You meant to be polite, but you don't have to be so polite with me. I don't expect it and I don't like it."

"All right, all right!" Reben growled, pacing the floor again, but in a constantly receding path. He did not speak. He felt that he had made a fool of himself, and he was embarrassed.

Daphne was so frightened with her success that she got to her feet, saying: "I suppose this means that you don't want me to work for you. It's true, then, what they say about the stage."

"Nonsense! Of course not! Rot! I never see most of my people except at rehearsals or performances. I've never spoken to three-quarters of 'em. If you want a job, you can have it, and no concessions are necessary. You don't have to make love to me. You make love to the audience, and if you can capture that you can slap my face every time you see me."

Daphne was astounded. She was engaged! She was exultant and thrilled with gratitude to Duane for introducing her to this marvelous opportunity and for the wisdom of his counsel.

Reben said: "If you'd come yesterday I'd have said I had nothing for you. But this very morning a chance arose; I had already sent to the agencies for some one to fill it."

Daphne had visions of stepping into the shoes of a star, but they speedily fled before Reben's words:

"The general understudy of the Kemble Company has grown tired of waiting for a chance to appear in public. She has led a life like the Man in the Iron Mask. She's quitting me this week for a small part in a road company. You can have her place if you want it. Do you?"

"You bet—er—indeed I do. How often does an understudy play?"

"As rarely as possible."

Daphne's joy turned to lead.

Reben added: "But we don't pay by performances. I'll pay you twenty-five a week. You wanted money. There's a little of it for a start. Do you want it?"

"Will it lead to anything better?"

"It might. There are legends of understudies getting their long-sought chances unexpectedly and making themselves stars in a single night. I've heard of it, but I never knew it. Still, I've known plenty of understudies to get good jobs and go on up the ladder."

"And I am to understudy Miss Kemble?"

"Yes, and all the other women rôles."

"And when do you suppose I'll get a chance to play Miss Kemble's part? Soon?"

"Never, I hope."

"That's encouraging!"

"If Miss Kemble fell ill, we'd ordinarily refund the money, because she's the star. But sometimes we might have to go ahead and give a performance at short notice. Chances in the other parts might come any day."

"I'm a sort of fireman, then?"

"Exactly; and the fewer times you're called out, the gladder I am to pay your salary."

"And you'll give me a better chance when you can?"

"Indeed I will. If you have the gift, the sooner I find it out and the harder I work it the more money I make. The more you earn the more I make. I'd like to pay you ten thousand a week."

"I'd like to have you. All right, I'll try."

He pressed a button on his desk once, then twice. The office-boy appeared, followed by the stenographer. Reben said to the boy: "Is Mr. Batterson here? Send him to me." To the stenographer he said: "Fill out a contract for Miss Kip—Miss— What's the first name? Miss Daphne Kip. Salary, twenty-five. Make it a three-year contract."

Daphne felt as flattered as a slave who has brought a high price at an auction. She was a trifle terrified at that "three years." Still, this was no time for quarreling with terms. It would always be easy to lose a job.

Reben was already busy at his desk. He motioned her absently to her chair and said, rather for Duane's sake than hers, she felt: "Sit down, won't you, till the contracts come? and pardon me if I—"

He finished the phrase by the deed. The office routine went on and Daphne might have been the chair she sat in, for all the attention he paid her. She felt rather ungallantly ignored. Still, she had asked to be treated on a business basis. He was taking her at her word.

CHAPTER XX

BEFORE the contracts were ready Mr. Batterson appeared. He was one of Reben's stage-managers, a worried, emotional, little man, worn to shreds with his task of stimulating and correcting the emotions by which others earned their wages and fame.

Reben introduced him to Daphne and explained her new office. Batterson seemed none too well pleased with the news that Daphne was ignorant of stage work to the last degree. He had found it hard enough to make the experienced actors read their lines as they must be read and keep on reading them so. To teach this dramatic infant how to walk and talk was an unwelcome labor.

He took Daphne into his office and pulled out a set of parts. They had been much handled by previous actresses and marked with cuts, revisions, and business. Daphne did not know what a cue looked like. When Batterson spoke of the number of "sides" in a part she could find only two. The abbreviations "bus." and "X" or "Xes" left her in the dark.

When she stumbled over them he cast his eyes heavenward in his swift impatience. He explained them with a vinegary gentleness. But he at least avoided the usual preliminary fencing. He made no effort whatsoever to flirt with her. Rather he gave her the impression that he was less likely to seize her in his arms and kiss her than to seize her by the hair, drag her out of his cave and leave her on the sidewalk.

He talked to her of the canons of interpretation. He walked through her scenes and spoke her lines for her

again and again and yet again. But somehow he could not teach her.

She was supposed to be a young, beautiful woman, quick to tears and laughter, and she was all of these things. But she could not seem to be or pretend to be any of them on the stage. And Batterson only confused her.

He tried to show her how to enter the scene, say, "How do you do?" quizzically, whimsically, walk on, sit down, cross her knees, utter a line of raillery, and laugh amiably. But all she could see was a homely little man with a cigarette voice, a Scotch-whisky smile, and a laugh and walk like a hyena prowling through a graveyard. He was even less helpful when he played the part of the tall and handsome hero whom she must love.

He tried everything but beating her. He flattered her, wheedled her, parodied, satirized, rebuked her, and occasionally he cursed her. She did not rebel even against his profanity, because she had no confidence in herself to support her resistance. She felt that she was far worse than he said she was when he said she was worst. She used all her funds of resolution in keeping from throwing down the part and running away in tears. She had none left for asserting her right to politeness.

If she could have heard what Batterson said of her to Reben she would have mailed the parts to him with a note of resignation. But Reben was used to Batterson's hyperboles and he had seen triumphs emerge from despair, swans from ugly ducklings.

He had seen apparent imbeciles suddenly get the hang of it and become artists overnight. There were certain notoriously bad rehearsers whom only an audience inspired.

He had such hopes of Daphne, and Duane exerted pressure on him to give her at least a chance. So he reminded Batterson that the divine Sarah Bernhardt and the immortal Mrs. Siddons had begun with failure; and he insisted on letting the girl be heard.

He was the more eager to have an understudy ready since one of the children of Miss Kemble (legally Mrs. Bret Winfield) was ill.

Once Daphne was out in the street again and released from the ordeal of pleasing Batterson, youth and ambition brought hope back again. Broadway at twilight was athrob with enthusiasm and she caught zest from the crowds. She was going home to study, carrying her little set of text-books like a school-girl. But she felt the wings of conquest fledging at her ankles or the wheel of fortune spinning under her toes.

Her very first effort had succeeded. She was a woman with a salary. She would be no longer a parasite on any man. She had a career and a business as well as the best of them.

She preferred to walk. It kept her in touch with the people whom she was to sway. These outdoor currents would all turn into her theater some night. Perhaps she would some day have a theater named after her, as other actresses did who had had no more advantage than she at first.

She had read of their delays and despondencies and their economies. That was a beautiful word—*economy*. She was enjoying economy now, saving a cab fare, or at the worst a street-car fare.

Her mother was at home alone. Leila had gone from that tea-party to another to which Mrs. Kip was not invited. Daphne's mother greeted her with relief. She had been worrying about Daphne's being out alone at dark. Daphne laughed with boyish contempt for parental timidity. That business of being watched for at twilight was all over now. She told her news with a gush of enthusiasm. It left Mrs. Kip cold, very cold.

She was a pious, church-going woman, Mrs. Kip. She had always looked upon the theater as a training-school for the still lower regions. She went to plays occasionally,

but usually with a feeling of dissipation and worldliness. Besides, it was one thing to see plays and another to act them.

To have her own daughter enter the playhouse by the stage-door was an incredibly cruel blow. If Daphne had proudly announced her intention of going on the streets, Mrs. Kip could hardly have been more alarmed. The worst of it was that she did not have to go. She had a father who had money enough and was generous with it. Mrs. Kip, like other wives, was occasionally driven to score a word of praise for her husband to keep her children from scoring—a kind of "safety goal," a football player would call it. Also she reminded Daphne that she had a rich brother, and a nice young man dying to marry her. There was no need of her going utterly to the bad.

Daphne tried to reason her mother out of her backwoods prejudices, but she only frightened her the more. Mrs. Kip retired to her room to write an urgent telegram to her husband demanding that he come on at once and rescue his child. She always called on him in an emergency and he always responded.

She was crying so hard that she could hardly finish the telegram. Daphne, in the mean while, was in the living-room, trying hard to memorize her lines and cues. The star rôle was lying on the table before her, and she kept her fingers on her ears to drown out the lamentations of her mother.

Leila came home eventually full of gossip and triumph. Her Dutilh gown had made a tremendous success; the other women wanted to murder her.

Mrs. Kip broke in on her chronicles with the dismal announcement of Daphne's new insanity. Leila was almost as bitter in opposition as Mrs. Kip had been, but from quite another motive. Leila had aristocratic impulses and looked forward to social splendors. She would gain no help from the fact that her husband's sister was a theatrical struggler.

Daphne escaped an odious battle with her by referring to the need for close study, and retreated into her own room, locking her mother out.

She stayed there, repeating her lines over and over and trying to remember the action that went with them as Miss Kemble had played it. She had a quick memory, but the intonation of the lines gave her extraordinary difficulty.

She remembered one of Miss Kemble's most delicious effects. She came on the stage unannounced and, pausing in the doorway, smiled whimsically and said, "How do you do?" That was all—just "How do you do?" But she uttered it so deliciously that a ripple of joy ran through the audience. Daphne tried to master the trick of it, but with no success. She said "How do you do?" in dozens of ways, with no result except to render the phrase meaningless gibberish.

She began to realize that the art of acting abounded in mysterious little difficulties, undreamed of by the laity. She feared that she would never master them even by brute force or by inspiration. A ghastly doubt of her ability to succeed so shattered her confidence that she resolved to give up her plans for a stage career, or any career. In a mood of fierce self-analysis her soul cried aloud within the reverberant caverns of itself:

"Daphne Kip, you have no temperament! You have no artistic sense, and you never had. You were never good for anything, and you never will be. You are just ordinary clay without imagination, or gifts, or any hope of a career. You're just like everybody else in the crowd of nobodies."

Among all the duels of life where two friends or enemies cross swords there are none so hideous as those when the soul like a Siamese monstrosity turns upon itself, pounding, biting, reviling.

Daphne flung down the part she was studying and flung

away ambition, and went out to tell the family that she agreed with them.

She was confronted by Leila in a rôle of despair. Bayard had telephoned that he could not get home for dinner. He would not be home in time to take Leila to the theater as he had promised.

Leila was in a frenzy. Her old problems, "What's to become of me?" and, "How am I to kill all this time?" were paramount again. She had nothing to do but wait for her man to come and take her somewhere. Daphne understood the tragedy of the modern wife: dowered with freedom, pampered with amusements, deprived of the blessing of toil, unaccustomed to seraglian torpor, she must yet wait on the whims or necessities of her husband.

Daphne reconsidered her decisions. Better all the difficulties and heartaches of the actress-trade than this prison loafing of wifely existence. She had something to do. She would be a star, and her theater would rescue forlorn women and shop-worn husbands from the torture of idle evenings.

CHAPTER XXI

THE three women dined together. Leila, disgusted, called it a hen party. She recalled the recent times before her marriage when she was never left alone of an evening. Bayard himself had held her first in his life. But as soon as he got her, and clamped the wedding-ring on her, he put her on a shelf and forgot her. She warned Daphne not to be fooled as she had been; Clay Wimburn would neglect her, once she was married, just as Bayard neglected his wife.

Leila was all for going to a theater in spite of Bayard, and without him. She offered to treat, if the two others would go with her. Mrs. Kip begged off: she could not stand the pace; Leila could not stand the repose.

Daphne said that she had to go to Reben's theater and watch another performance of the Kemble play, study it for points. Leila had not seen the play, and she was glad to accept an invitation, especially as Reben had given Daphne a pair of complimentary tickets. Entrance on a pass has always added the final note of prestige to theater-going.

While the girls were dressing, Daphne was called to the telephone by the astonishing news that Clay Wimburn wanted to talk to her. She felt an instinctive dread even of speaking to him over the wire in her sparse costume, and gathered her bath-robe together as she set the receiver to her incarnadined ear.

Her heart was aglow with pride in the fact that Clay's pride had not outworn his love, and she drank in his voice as if it were water from a refreshing spring.

He announced what she had hoped that he would announce. He declared that he would not give her up and could not live through the long night unless she granted him a chance to see her for a while.

She told him of the two theater tickets and wanted him to buy a third and act as escort. He accepted the office with enthusiasm. Daphne dashed into her clothes, and by the time he reached the house she was ready and waiting.

But she had not explained why she wanted to see the play again. She had to describe her appeal to Duane, his response, Reben's courtesy, and her new career. She omitted to mention the rebukes she had had to administer to Duane and Reben; but there was horror enough in what she told.

Clay revealed a power of temper that she had never suspected in him. He broke forth into a diatribe against Tom Duane as a wrecker of homes, engagements, and other paradises, a serpent offering apples of knowledge to every foolish little Eve. What he said of the crimes of the theatrical business and of Reben as its chief Moloch could hardly have been exceeded by a Methodist preacher or a theatrical novelist. Though he had been glad to take Daphne to the theater as often as he could afford it—oftener than that—he did not spare even the audience.

"What do you want to go on the stage for?" he demanded. "Why must you go out and display yourself before a mob of vile spectators? What other motive can you have besides vanity? There might be some excuse if you were starving, but you've got a father and a home; besides, you've got a husband waiting to slave for you and provide you with all the comfort that love and hard work can get you. You have no right to go on the stage. I forbid you to paint up that pretty face and expose that pretty body to the public and to ruin that pretty soul. I forbid you! They belong to me!"

She admired his gifts of storm so much that her answers

were very humble. She bent before the gale, but she held her new possessions all the closer under the shelter of her cloak.

"I don't belong to you, dear," she said, very meekly. "My soul and body and face don't belong to you. They hardly belong to me. I don't want you to slave to buy me things. I don't want to take my poor father's money any more. I'm not starving, but I'd rather starve than go on eating the bread and cake somebody else is sweating for. I'm going on the stage because it's the quickest way I know for a woman to gain her independence, and that's what I'm after."

"Oh, you want to be independent, eh? Of your people, and of me, especially? You don't want to love me any more?" He was very bitter in his torment; but still she kept gentle:

"I think that what I am doing is proof of my better love. I think you ought to help me."

"Help you? How can I help you?" he snarled. "I don't know any managers. Tom Duane has already taken you out of my reach and put you in Reben's power—the blackguards! I dare say they've both already—"

He could not say what he thought. The mere idea that the sacred person of his betrothed could have been profaned by the caress, even by the eyes, of other men was intolerable.

It was well that emotion strangled him, for his accusation would have been the truth, and a most inconvenient truth to explain. In every man there lingers an element of the instinct to wall his woman in from the adventurous eyes of other men, and to shroud her in yashmak and shapeless cloak when she must be abroad. Every bit of liberty he gives her hurts one part of his soul, however much the rest of him may rejoice.

It would have been hard for Daphne to explain to Clay Wimburn that two very kind gentlemen had tried to kiss

her, but had accepted her rebukes in good part and consented to work for her without hope of future reward.

Most women meet that sort of encounter frequently, and even the faithfulest of them feel that it is wisest and most loyal to keep such incidents to themselves. Otherwise endless broils would ensue.

This is one of the many fields where secrets must grow, where dishonor stands rooted in honor and faith unfaithful keeps one truely false. The border line even of fidelity is therefore a wavering, uncertain, and contradictory boundary, and nobody can be altogether faithful to any one else. To be faithful in intention and in general is a good deal to achieve.

So Daphne, loving Clay above all other men, zealous to make herself his ideal companion, had already involved herself in alliances that she could not entirely reveal to him. She wondered how many more of these she would accumulate in her new pilgrimage.

She found, as lovers will, that the best hope of reconciliation lay in a temporary breach. She assumed, therefore, a pose of cold dignity. What Clay was about to accuse Duane and Reben of was so hateful as to be almost impossible. The same expression of repugnance that she had used when it happened served perfectly now to rebuke her lover for imagining that it could ever have happened.

She drew herself up to all the height she had and spoke like an offended princess:

"If you can't trust me, you can't really love me. You'd better look elsewhere for somebody that will live according to your orders. Good night, Mr. Wimburn."

If he had had wit enough to laugh and seize her in his arms he might have brought her back from the long journey she was beginning. But love blinded and enraged him, and he compressed all his disappointments and longing into one bitter groan that sounded like a gasp of disgust. The difference between "Ah" and

"Agh!" is only a breath, but it makes all the difference to the listener.

Clay seemed to say "Agh!" and then "Good night!"

He had brought his engagement-ring along with him. He took it away again.

Daphne, with grim self-possession like the crust over a molten iron, answered his passionate "Good night!" with a calm "Good evening."

CHAPTER XXII

DAPHNE closed the door again on love and went back to her mother and Leila. The look in her eyes dared them to ask her a question. She would have emptied the white-hot brasier of her anger at life on either of them that spoke.

They wisely pretended complete indifference, and Leila merely asked Daphne if she were ready to start for the theater. Daphne said that she was, and they went down to a taxicab.

Leila said that it was a shame that she had no automobile of her own. Since Bayard was going to spend all his days and nights away from her she ought at least to have a car to save her from the humiliation and risk of going about in hackney cabs with strange drivers.

Daphne made no comments. She spent the evening at the theater in alternate flashes of wrath at the miserable state of her love-affair, and of terror at the things she was seeing on the stage and would have to repeat some night before an audience. She tried to catch each trick of gesture and accent and to impress it on her memory, but her soul was in a swirl.

When Leila and Daphne got back to the apartment they found Bayard waiting. He had come home worn out with his office dramas and had counted on finding nepenthe in his pretty wife's arms. But his pretty wife had taken her arms elsewhere. He was thrown into further dejection and a little alarmed.

When at last Leila came in he did not greet her with added joy for her belated return, but with protest at her

absence. This hurt her. The more fiercely lovers love each other the more delicate are the antennæ of their souls, the more easily bruised. Resentment always waits just back of passion, and there is always a frail barrier between a thrilling reunion and a good fight.

Leila reacted to Bayard's complaint of her absence with a complaint of his. Daphne had had enough of conflict; she hastened to her own room and made ready for the welcome oblivion of sleep.

But the walls of the apartment were like sounding-boards, and the wounded souls of Bayard and Leila forgot discretion. They wrangled wildly well.

It was impossible for Daphne and her mother not to hear. They stood together in their nightgowns, listening and wondering what the outcome would be. They had felt uncomfortable enough at the billing and cooing of the two lovers, but the pecking and cawing on the other side of the partition alarmed them.

Leila, in her grief at being left alone all day and all evening, made use of every grievance as a weapon. The things she had bought, the accounts she had opened that morning for further purchases, had been, at the time, proofs of her anxiety to make herself beautiful for Bayard.

Now she used them as proofs of her hostility, as proofs of her determination to thwart his stinginess. She stormed that she would buy what she needed in spite of him. If he preferred his business to her love, she would find diversion elsewhere, as his sister was doing. He need not think that he could leave his wife to entertain his whole family and turn their apartment into a Kip hotel and expect her to sit there and do nothing but wait for him.

And now the in-laws were in the war with a vengeance. Mrs. Kip and Daphne stared at each other in dismay. They felt evicted, and whispered that they must not spend another night under that roof.

Bayard, filled with chagrin at his own plight, caught

between his old family and his new, struck out blindly at both. He declared that women were all impossible, and that the only wise man was the monk in the wilderness. All that women wanted was money, money, money, and their affection was only a pretense.

He had come home to escape the money talk, and it was all he found there. He berated Leila with a vigor that astounded her and kindled her to a wrath that astounded him. They were waging the world-old loathsome Pin-money War, and they fought it with young enthusiasm.

Daphne and her mother could not see their eyes, but they could imagine the looks in them as they confronted each other. Hearing them, one would have thought them almost anything but a couple of lovers still under the authority of the honeymoon.

The elder Mrs. Kip was reminded of her own quarrel-riddled past and felt a great pity for her son without feeling any for her husband. Daphne saw in the quarrel a warning of the storms ahead of her and Clay, in the future, if she married him on his money.

When Leila and Bayard had exhausted all their bile they had nothing left but love; so they fell into each other's arms in mutual affection and common remorse. Leila made solemn pledges never to buy anything on credit again, and Bayard told her she must buy herself anything her sweet little soul wanted.

Leila had an inspiration: "Give me an allowance, honey, a regular allowance. Then we won't ever quarrel again."

"I will!" Bayard snapped at this suggestion, and peace poised for a descent, while they began to debate on the proper amount of the allowance.

The submission of both of them to such a combination of pension and bribe shocked Daphne worse than the quarrel. She resolved again not to place herself in any such sentimental peonage.

She was glad that Clay Wimburn had quarreled with

her—and over something besides her spending of his money. She had taken a distrust for love. Like other forms of fire, it was a good servant, but a bad master. Better the wages of heartless strangers than the dependence on the wanton whims of affection. She might not have temperament, but perseverance gained more battles, and she would win this one. She would succeed on the stage in spite of everybody.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE next day Batterson telephoned her that he had called a rehearsal with the company. Daphne went to the theater in terror. The stage looked utterly forlorn with the actors and actresses standing about in their street clothes. Under the bright lights with the people made up and the audience in full bloom, like a vast garden, there would be impersonality and stimulation; but the present scene was as doleful as the funeral of an unpopular man.

Courage was largely a matter of her super-self forcing her reluctant feet forward. A soldier ordered to leave a bomb-proof shelter for an advance, a playground of shrapnel, has just the struggle with his vaso-motor system that Daphne had with hers.

Batterson was honestly eager to be disappointed by her unexpected revelation of secret abilities, and all the company wanted her to be a genius, if only for the sake of their own time and stress.

With the kindliest smile an amiable wolf ever wore, Batterson invited the fluttering lamb to come to the stream and drink. Daphne came forward in a trance and heard Batterson say:

"Ladies and gentlemen—Miss Kip, our new understudy. Give her all the help you can."

Miss Kemble had graciously chosen to be present for that purpose, though the result was only to increase Daphne's embarrassment. An imitation in the presence of the living model was a double load to carry.

Miss Kemble went forward to Daphne and took her

hand and petted it and said: "I'm so glad to see you. You are a positive guarantee of good health for me."

"Thank you," said Daphne. "But I don't believe I quite understand."

Miss Kemble laughed: "The rest of them do. Don't you know the saying that a pretty understudy keeps a star twinkling? I'd never dare be ill, with you waiting to step into my shoes and show the public how much better you are."

"Oh, Miss Kemble!" Daphne gasped. "An angel couldn't fill your shoes."

"Are they as big as that?" said Miss Kemble, and Daphne was worse befuddled.

"I didn't mean that."

"Of course you didn't. You must meet my aunt, Mrs. Vining. She won't object to your playing her parts, I'm sure."

Mrs. Vining, who had played all manner of rôles for half a century, and was now established as a famous player of hateful old *grandes dames*, spared Daphne her ready vinegar, and chose to mother her.

"I got my start the way you're doing, my dear child. Only, I wasn't half so pretty, and I made a miserable fluke of it. Don't let anything discourage you, and if that little whipper-snapper of a Batterson bothers you, just signal to me and I'll restore him to his place."

Mr. Reben had come down from his office to make up his own mind. He smiled with a kind of challenging cordiality, and murmured: "So our little business woman is going to open the shop. Well, all you've got to do is to deliver the goods and I'll buy 'em at your own price."

Batterson rapped on the kitchen table that stood on the apron of the stage under a naked bunch light of glaring brilliance:

"Places, please, for the entrance. Ready? All right, Eldon!"

The noble matinée idol put his hat on a table, walked on, sat down on a divan composed of two broken chairs, and read an imaginary newspaper.

Batterson said: "Door-bell! Buzz-z-z."

A well-dressed young man, whom Daphne recognized as the elderly butler, walked across and opened an imaginary door between two chairs. This was the cue for Miss Kemble's famous "How do you do?"

Everybody waited and watched for the new-comer to make her début in the new world. Everybody heard in imagination the purling liquid of Sheila Kemble's delicious tones, always the same at every night and matinée and always as fresh and warm as new milk.

Then was a silence. Daphne stood with heels screwed to the floor and tongue glued to the roof of her mouth.

"All right, Miss Kip," said Batterson, with ominous patience. "Come on, come on, please!"

Another silence, then Daphne laughed and choked. "I'm awfully stupid. I've forgotten the line."

Batterson gnashed his unlighted cigar and growled: "Howjado! Howjado!"

"Oh yes! Thank you. I'm so sorry!" said Daphne, and walked on at the wrong side of the chairs.

Everybody shuddered to realize that she had entered through a solid wall. This miracle was ignored, but there was no ignoring the peculiarly ineloquent note she struck when she bowed to the butler and stammered:

"How are you?"

A sigh went through the vast profound and void of the empty theater. Instinct told even the echoes that Daphne did not belong and never could belong. Batterson groaned, tragically:

"Not to the butler, please! Don't say 'How are you?' to the butler. Don't say 'How are you?' to anybody, *please*. Script says 'Howjado?' Say 'Howjado?' to Mr. Eldon there. Say 'Howjado?' to Mr. Eldon there."

"How do you do?" said Daphne, bowing to Eldon, and speaking with a soullessness of a squeezed doll.

Eldon rose, folded up his imaginary paper, and came forward with a pitying desire to help her. He had gone through her agony, had suffered the slings and arrows of outrageous stage-managers, had once by a blunder broken up a performance and sent a large audience into spasms of ill-timed laughter, and had been ordered never to ask for a line again. This very Batterson who admired him so well had been the persecutor and the victim of his inexperienced youth. But now Eldon had arrived. Batterson was proud to brag of him as his pupil. Eldon hoped that the scared little Kip woman would win through the same bitter trials to the same perilous and always endangered success. But he had a fear.

He delivered her his line with benevolent gentleness. He waited, then gave her her line with exquisite tact. She did not repeat it after him. He said to her:

"Don't be afraid; you're all right."

He gave her the line again and she parroted it after him. She leaped then to a speech several minutes farther on. He drew her back to the cue:

"Pardon me, but I think I have a line before that."

The rehearsal blundered on. It was not Daphne's fright that disturbed the rest. It was her complete failure to suggest the character, or any character.

The roughest diamond flashes where it is cut. The dullest flint gives some fire where it is smitten. But Daphne was neither diamond nor flint. She was other things, perhaps more useful and beautiful. She could glow, too, and give back fire, but otherwise.

The play-folk admired her beauty, her pluck, her shame-fast modesty; but they felt that she was in the wrong place. Their hearts were wrung for her, but their artistic principles were violated, and they watched her with a

mixture of affection, dismay, and irresistible amusement. Blunders are the original source of laughter.

But Batterson found nothing to amuse him, and Reben tasted that dust and ashes of disappointment with which theatrical managers are so familiar when they bite on the Dead Sea fruit of beauty without dramatic talent.

The worst of it came during the ardent love scene where the woman pleaded with her husband, begged him to understand that her career was not in conflict with her love, but longed to co-operate with it. It was a problem something like Daphne's own; like, indeed, the problem of increasing myriads of women who wish to have both the home and the world, as men have them both.

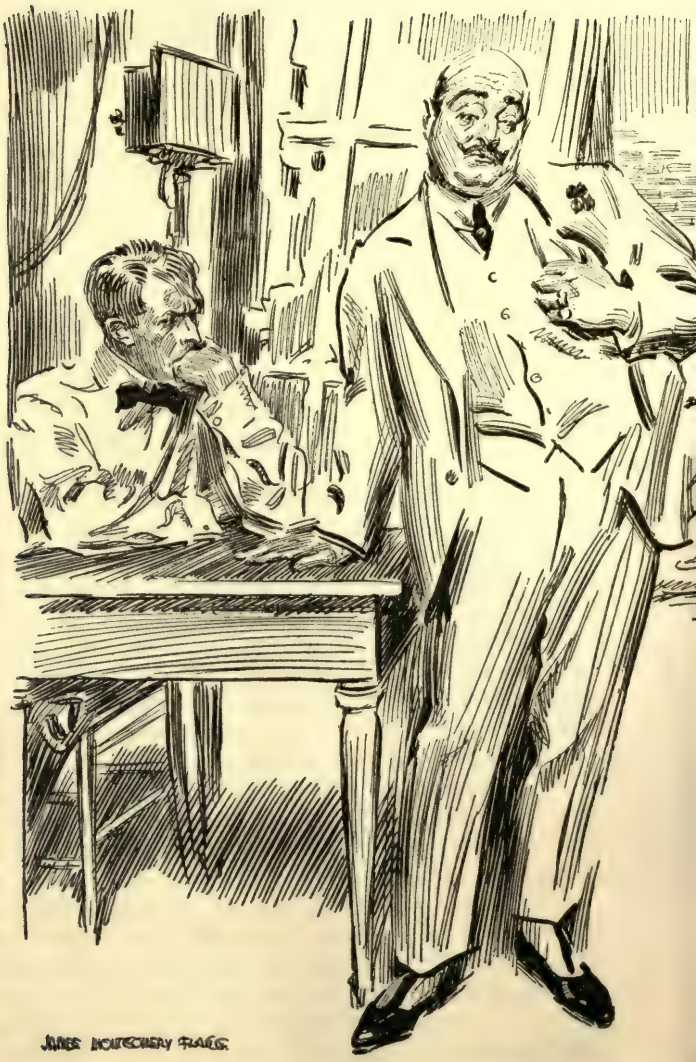
Poor Eldon had to stand the brunt of the scene. He had to be embraced by a beautiful girl whom a total lack of the instinct of impersonation rendered unbelievably awkward. Batterson had to come forward and drape Daphne's arms about Eldon himself to place them where they had to be. One would have thought that she had never embraced anybody—not even her father!

A complete failure of memory compelled Daphne to refer again and again to the part. With one arm crooked over Eldon's shoulder she would turn and hunt for her lost place in the manuscript. She kept thumbing the pages clumsily, dropping the booklet, scrambling for it in contest with Eldon, thanking him, finding her place, and reading a line of tempestuous passion with the conviction of a terrified school-girl piping her first recitation.

Then Eldon would miserably groan his response while the less-tender members of the company tiptoed outside to guffaw, and while Batterson turned away and gnawed his knuckles in a rage, like Ugolino's in Inferno.

Miss Kemble tried to help. She asked Daphne to step aside and watch while she went through the scene. But she was so unnerved that she forgot her own lines and had to refer to the manuscript, while Eldon waited in





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acute distress and Daphne, looking on, said: "Oh, I see. I think I understand it now." Then she forgot it all again at the repetition. Somehow the rehearsal was worried through to the end and Batterson dismissed the company with sarcastic thanks. Then he went to Reben to demand a substitute.

Daphne went home, dreading her fate, but not knowing what the verdict was. She felt sure that it would be not guilty of dramatic ability. She was worn out with the exposure of her own faults, and uncertain which she feared the more: to be dismissed or to be accepted. The latter meant unending trials.

But she had cut herself off from her lover, dismissed him as coldly as Reben could possibly dismiss her. She was in very great need of some one to lean on, of some one to make her smile and to praise her up a bit from the dust.

At the elevator she found Tom Duane. He had just telephoned up to the apartment to ask if she were in. There was a welcome flattery in his frank delight. She asked him up. When they reached the apartment the maid said that her mother and Leila were both out; also, "a Mr. Abel or something" had telephoned and left word that she should call him. The number he left was Reben's.

Daphne was sure that he had a death-warrant to deliver. She put off the blow. She wanted a few minutes' respite.

Tom Duane was electric with cheer. He praised Daphne with inoffensive heartiness and insisted on hearing the history of her progress. She gave the worst possible account of her stupidity. He would have none of her self-depreciation.

"Everything's got to begin," he said. "Some of the greatest actors are bad at rehearsal, and never get over it. Some of the greatest actresses always are at their worst on the first performance. You're bound to succeed.

You have beauty and charm and grace and magnetism no end. Don't worry. I'll speak to Reben and make him restrain Batterson. We'll make a star of you yet."

There was a fine reassurance in that word "we" in spite of its pleasant tang of impudence. It gave her strength to go to the telephone and call up Reben. She came back in despair and collapsed on the divan.

Tom Duane was at her side instantly. "You're ill! In Heaven's name, what can I do?"

His solicitude pleased her. She smiled palely: "Mr. Reben told me he was afraid I'd better give up the job. He was very polite and awfully sorry, but he said he didn't think I was quite suited to the work. The time was so short that he had to engage another woman of more experience, and would I please send back the parts. He said that later, perhaps, there might be another chance, but—oh—oh—oh!"

She was crying with all her might. She had worked hard and endured much, and fought her people and driven her lover away, only to be cast out as incompetent and undesirable.

Gradually she realized that Duane's hands were on her shoulders. He was squeezing them as if to keep her from sobbing herself to pieces. His face was close to hers, and he was murmuring:

"You poor little thing. You mustn't grieve. You're too fine and too beautiful for such work."

She flung herself free. "No, no, I'm an imbecile—I'm no good—that's all. I'm simply no good to myself or any one. I wanted so to succeed! but I can't! I can't! They won't even give me a chance."

Those big hands were at her shoulders again. That soothing voice was ministering courage and praise:

"You are not no good. You shall succeed! I'll make Reben take you back. I've helped Reben out when he was in trouble. I've lent him money and I'll make him give you your chance. I promise that, on my word!"

She stared at him through her tears. They blurred him in dancing flashes of light as if he were a sun-god. She caught his hands from her shoulders, but she had to hold them in hers. She was drowning, and she must cling to whatever arms stretched down to her. She must not question whose they were till she was safe again on the solid earth.

Duane was laughing now and patting her on the back as if she were a frightened child. She felt no right to rebuke his caresses. They were such as a brother might give a sister. His arm about her was that of a comrade, sustaining another in a battle.

He was the only one in the world who offered her courage and praise and help in her need.

CHAPTER XXIV

CONSOLATION is a dangerous office when one of the parties to it is a man and the other a woman. The more sincere the grief and the more sincere the compassion, the more perilous the communion.

Daphne's grief was that of a little girl whose doll-house has fallen apart, and Duane's sympathy was that of the big boy who will glue it together again. But he and she were no longer children and she was in love with another man—all the more bound to Clay Wimburn from the fact that they had quarreled and the visible gold bond was gone. Yet Daphne could not impute mean motives to Duane in the face of his offer to regain her lost opportunity for her.

And, indeed, Duane's motives were of the noblest. It would have been outrageous to criticize them.

But Duane's heart was as susceptible as a rake's heart usually is. He was cynical toward women's tears, as a rule, because he had found them selfish, or the result of wounded vanity or of frustrated selfishness. The cynic surprised from an unexpected angle, however, is the most ingenuous of men.

It was a new sensation to Duane to find a girl crying because she was thwarted in nothing more selfish than her wish to be independent for the relief of others and her willingness to work hard for her own support. He knew that there was no personal conceit in Daphne's ambition, no hankering to publish her beauty to a maximum circulation of admirers. She wanted to pay her own way, and luck refused her the privilege.

Duane had seen enough of the theater to know how peculiarly cruel its disappointments are to the super-sensitive beings that people it. Daphne was the latest and most blameless victim of its conditions.

He had promised her to be her good friend and omit flirtatious advances. Even when she broke down and cried he restrained his impetuous hands. But at length they had to go out to her. He embraced her as a pitiful fellow-creature in defeat. But once she was in his arms she proved to be also a very warm, round, sleek, beautiful, caressable young woman.

She welcomed his embrace at first because it upheld her at a moment when her heart was reeling like a shot bird. But once she had taken his hands with grateful enthusiasm, he became more than the heroic rescuer, the gentle consoler—he became the strong, clean, warm, attractive power that he was.

Duane was no Greek god and had not the look of one, but he was what is still more dangerous among the un-Grecian women to-day—a magnetic, polished, tactful man of the world. The Greek gods of our time seem to have drifted toward female impersonation or costume dancing.

Daphne's self-respect and Duane's respect for her might speedily have dissolved their embrace, though it would have left them in a mood of mutual tenderness. But suddenly they heard a door closed and they started apart guiltily.

With a great shock they both realized how it would look to an interloper to find them clinging to each other. No outsider could realize the actual situation and the gradual steps that had brought them together. Any attempt to explain would seem ridiculous and hypocritical.

It was neither Leila nor Mrs. Kip that closed the door. Nor was it the curious maid. She was so busily making ready for an evening out with her young man that she had no time even to eavesdrop. The door was closed by a

breeze that had come spiraling up around the building and rushed into another room.

A fatalist would have said that the zephyr was a divinely sent messenger for the rescue of two good souls from being too good to each other. Whatever the explanation, the result was a rescue.

The shock of the door blown shut startled Daphne as if Clay Wimburn had appeared and fired a bullet.

It was a tonic shock, however.

Duane and Daphne stood for a moment, trembling with dread of the opinion of the imaginary intruder. When they understood that they had not been observed they laughed foolishly. The spell was broken. But they had been warned. They regretted that a man and a woman might not put their arms across each other's shoulders as two men might in good-comradeship. But they realized that it was not permissible.

Duane said, with a matter-of-fact briskness: "I'll call Reben up at once. No, I'll go see him."

"But you put me under such obligations. I'm afraid—"

"Never be afraid of an obligation."

"I'm afraid I can never repay it."

"Then you're one ahead. But you can repay me, and you will."

"How?"

"Let's wait and see. Good-by. Don't worry."

He gave her a hand-grip of perfect good-fellowship and went into the hall. She followed him to tell him again how kind he was. As she was clasping his hand again Leila opened the door with her latch-key.

CHAPTER XXV

NOW there was triple embarrassment. Tom Duane had paid ardent court to Leila before she married Bayard. Here he was in Bayard's wife's home, apparently flirting with Bayard's young sister.

Leila felt all the outraged sentiments of jealousy and all the indignation of a chaperon who has been circumvented. Duane and Daphne knew exactly what she was thinking, but dared not acknowledge her unspoken rebuke, even to answer it.

Duane retreated in poor order. Daphne stammered an explanation too brief and muddled to suffice. Then she went to her room.

There her mother found her when she came in later. Daphne had only a faint hope that Duane could work his miracle twice, so she told her mother that she had failed as an actress. She told her, bluntly:

"Mamma, I've been fired."

To her comfort, her mother caught her to her ample bosom and said: "I'm glad of it. I'm much obliged to whoever is to blame. Not but what you could have succeeded if you had kept at it. But you're too good for such a wicked life. A person couldn't be an actor without being insincere and a pretender; and my little girl is too honest. So now you come along home with me."

"No, thank you, mamma."

"You just must. I was hoping to get started to-night, but I can't, so we'll go to a hotel till to-morrow."

"Go to a hotel?"

"To a hotel! Do you suppose I'd spend another day

under this roof after what Leila said about me last night?"

The superb acoustics worked both ways, and Leila heard that she had been heard. She dashed into the room to disclaim any malice and to insist on Mrs. Kip's remaining forever.

Mrs. Kip tried to be majestically lofty, but Leila would not be rebuffed. She pulled Mrs. Kip's arms about her and, holding her tight, insisted on being forgiven. At length Mrs. Kip relented and took her daughter-in-law back into as much of her good graces as a daughter-in-law has a right to expect. She consented to stay the one more night, but she insisted that she must go back to Cleveland the next day. She painted a vivid picture of the ruin into which her neglected home was undoubtedly falling. She said that Daphne would go back with her, but Daphne said, "No."

Mrs. Kip had gathered herself together for a vigorous assault when the telephone rang and the maid brought word that a gent'man wished to speak with Miss Daphne.

It was Duane, and she braced herself for another blow. But his voice was clarion with success.

"I've seen Reben. It's all right. He's promised to keep you on and give you a chance. He says for you to report at the theater at seven-thirty to-night."

And now again Daphne was more afraid of her success, such as it was, than of her failure. But it was pleasant to carry the news to her mother and Leila.

It disgusted them both. They were still trying to dissuade her from continuing on the downward path when a telegram from her father came for her mother:

Taking beaver arrive Grand Central tomorrow don't meet me love, Wes.

He had spent several minutes of literary labor in getting it all into the ten words. He had controlled his own impulse to waste a few pennies for his own ease, but he had

not refused to spend many dollars in answering his wife's call for help.

The word "beaver" puzzled them till Bayard came home and explained that it was the name of an express train leaving Cleveland at four-thirty-five in the afternoon and reaching New York at seven-fifty in the morning.

Bayard was late, as usual, and Leila's temper had just begun to simmer when the door was opened stealthily and a hand was thrust in. It proffered a small box of jeweler's size and waved it like a flag of truce.

Leila rushed forward with a cry of delight, seized the packet and then the hand, and drew Bayard into the room and into her arms.

"This is your apology, I suppose," she said.

"Yes, the apology for being late, and that's what made me late."

Leila was enraptured. She adored gifts and she had the knack of inspiring them. Bayard lacked the native instinct for paying tribute. He was not by nature one of those charming souls that always bring flowers or candies or some trinket when they call. Leila was training him for that class.

The little square parcel provoked her curiosity. It might contain anything from a diamond sunburst down to a silver stick-pin. She tore the paper off and opened the pasteboard box and seized out a little velvet casket of glowing promise.

She opened this so excitedly that the contents fell to the floor. She swooped for them and brought up a platinum chain with a delicate plaque of tiny diamonds and pearls on a device of platinum.

Her face was flushed from the swoop and from her delight, and her eyes had the baleful glitter of diamonds. She kissed the jewelry, then pounced on Bayard with a swoop of gratitude. She was exceedingly beautiful in

her flaming exultance, and Bayard was proud of her and of his ability to enhance her beauty.

Leila ran to Mrs. Kip and Daphne, exclaiming: "Aren't they beautiful? Aren't they wonderful? Aren't they glorious?"

Mrs. Kip and Daphne tried to keep the pace, but once more they could not forget who it was that was raining gold down on this greedy stranger. Their alarm was not diminished when Bayard said to Leila:

"You're not the only one who can open accounts. I started one for those."

Leila was delighted at hearing this, which should have frightened her. But Daphne caught another of her lightning-flash glimpses of the relations of men and women. Being herself a wage-earner-elect, though, she kept silence. She was only demanding of the world!

"What right has that woman who does not work to accept the crazy extravagance or rebuke the sober industry of that hard-working man? What right has she to criticize his hours? What right has any woman to the submissive homage and the tax-paying tributes of any man? Why is any man fool enough to pay a woman a high salary for being pretty and lazy and hard to please?"

Those were her thoughts, but her words were politely enthusiastic.

Bayard was not yet done with his efforts to placate the graceful idol he had niched in his life. He took from his pocket a pale brochure and said to Leila:

"That allowance, we agreed on, you know?"

"Yes, I know."

"Well, instead of paying it to you week by week I decided to open a bank account for you; so I ran over to this bank at the lunch hour and made a deposit to your credit—five hundred dollars!"

Leila forgot her jewelry for the moment in this new pride. She strutted about with mock hauteur, waving

Mrs. Kip and Daphne aside, and saying: "Don't speak to me. I am a lady with a bank account."

Mrs. Kip sighed in dreary earnest, "That's more than I ever was."

"I'll start you a bank account, mother," said Bayard, "as soon as I get a little further ahead." He meant it, and she was glad that he meant it, but she knew that at the present rate he would be a long while getting a little ahead. He was making rapid progress to the rear.

All his soul was devoted to pleasing this creature, about whom there was nothing extraordinary except Bayard's infatuation for her. Leila was poring over her bank-book, the blank pages in which so many dramas, tragedies, and life histories could be codified in bald numerals.

Her first question was ominous: "Do I have to go all the way down to Broad Street every time I want to draw out some money?"

Her first thought was already to attack the integrity of her store!

"No, dearest," said Bayard, "there is an up-town branch, right around the corner. But I hope your visits there will be more for put-in than take-out."

"That depends on how much you give me," Leila smiled.

"She's a born grafter," Bayard said, with a rather difficult laugh.

She meditated, and asked, with her kind of earnestness, "Honestly, honey, how long ought five hundred to last—in New York?"

"Forever," said Bayard. "It's only a nest-egg. I want it to grow and grow. Every time I give you anything I want you to put some of it aside. Maybe some day I'll want to borrow some of it for a while. Maybe you can save me from a crash some day. Anyhow, it will be a great help to me to feel that I have a thrifty little wife at home. A man has to plunge a good deal in business. It's his wife that usually makes him or breaks him."

Leila did not rise to the honor he thrust upon her. She dodged behind her own character: "Better not count too much on me. I never could save. Daddy and mamma both tried a dozen times to teach me. But they never knew how themselves."

"You must learn, honey," Bayard pleaded. "It's the most important thing you have to learn. You've got beauty and charm and everything delightful. You ought to be able to learn this one thing."

"All right, I'll try," she murmured, toying with the jewelry.

Bayard studied her and felt afraid. He spoke with unusual solemnity: "Old Ben Franklin said, 'A shilling earned, and sixpence spent, a fortune. Sixpence earned, and a shilling spent, bankruptcy'—or something like that. But Moses got ahead of him. When he handed down the Ten Commandments he whispered an extra one to be the private secret of the chosen people."

"What was that?" said Leila, with a minimum of interest.

"Thou shalt not spend all thou earnest," said Bayard. "It was—well, it was the thirteenth commandment, I guess: a mighty unlucky one to break. The Jews have kept it pretty well. They've been the bankers of the world even while they were persecuted."

Leila shrugged her handsome shoulders and studied the gems.

Bayard went on: "I'll go out and earn the money if you'll stay home and try to save it. It's hard for the same person to do both. But with a little team-play now we can be Mr. and Mrs. Crœsus in our old age."

That was an unfortunate choice of words. Leila was not interested in her old age. She said:

"Of course I'll help you all I can, but I'm afraid I'm not much good as a miser. The nicest thing about this bank account is that I won't have to nag you every time I want some cash. It's so humiliating for people who love each other to be always discussing money."

"Money is a big part of love," Bayard began, "and one of the best ways a woman can show her affection for her husband is by being tender of his money. They are the most sensitive part of his feelings."

His sermon would have been more effective if it had not been inspired by his own mistake: it was a temperance lecture, punctuated with hiccoughs. Leila ended it with a little grimace of disgust.

"But let's not talk about it to-night. Let's dine somewhere and go to the theater. I want to show off my new splendor."

"Fine!" said Bayard, trying to cast away his forebodings and lift himself by his own boot-straps. "Get on your duds, mother, you and Daphne."

"I can't go," said Daphne. "I've got to be at the fun-factory at half past seven and I've hardly time to eat anything."

CHAPTER XXVI

WHILE Leila and Bayard and Mrs. Kip were putting on their festal robes Daphne was eating alone a hasty meal brought up tardily from the restaurant.

Before they were dressed she had to march out in what she called her working-clothes. The hall-man ran to call her a taxicab, but she shook her head. Her humble twenty-five dollars a week would not justify a chariot to and from the shop.

She walked rapidly along Fifty-ninth Street, but not rapidly enough to escape one or two murmurous gallants. She boarded a Broadway street-car at Seventh Avenue and dropped her nickel in the box with a strange sense of plebeianism. It was at one of the still hours of New York life when the current of the traffic pauses between ebb and flow. The home-going tide was ended and the outgoing flood to the theaters had not begun.

Daphne felt gray and mousy, cowering alone in a corner of the car, but a passenger opposite stared at her so persistently and minutely that her flesh fairly ached under his eyes. There was no escaping his inspection; no glaring him down. At length she remembered a bit of advice she had read somewhere and began to gaze at the feet of her persecutor, to study them as he studied her, only with a cynical smile.

The scheme worked to perfection. The ogler began to fidget, to cross and shift his brogans; finally to examine them. At length he let them carry him out of the car.

Daphne was glad of the new weapon, but it seemed to be at best a frail and uncertain defense. A few blocks

farther on she rose to get out. The conductor carried her past her corner. She descended in a swirl of cabs and suffered two or three narrow escapes from injury or death before she reached the sidewalk.

Then she hastened with bent head through the pitiless sheen of Broadway as if she were running a gantlet. Other solitary women were sauntering the street at their trade. The only visible distinction between them and Daphne was a matter of haste.

Daphne turned a corner into a dark street and found the stage entrance of the Odeon Theater. The decrepit doorkeeper recognized her and let her pass. She had no dressing-room to go to and did not know what she was expected to do. Batterson was lost in a big box scene the stage-hands were constructing. She tried to find him, and was extraordinarily successful in getting in the way of every racing canvas.

She found Batterson quarreling with a property-man over the responsibility for a broken vase. He ignored her till at length she ventured to stammer:

"Here I am, Mr. Batterson."

"So I see. Well, sit down somewhere."

Finding a seat was no easy task. Every piece of furniture she selected became at once the object of the scene-shifters' attack, and she had to take flight.

Members of the company strolled in, paused at the mail-box, and went to their various cells.

Eventually Batterson found that all the company was on hand and in good health. He said to Daphne, "Everybody is here and nobody sick, so you needn't stay after the curtain goes up."

But she wanted to learn her trade, so she loitered about, feeling like an uninvited poor relation. The members of the company came from their lairs, looking odd and unreal in their paint. They seemed to be surprised that Daphne was still in existence. Eldon gave her a curious smile of greeting.

She heard the call-boy crying "Overture" about the corridors. She heard the orchestra playing "the King's piece." Then it struck up a march that sounded remote and irrelevant. There was a loud swish which she supposed to be the curtain going up. An actor and an actress in white flannels with tennis-rackets under their arms linked hands and skipped into the well of light. They bandied repartee for a time. Then a smiling actor in butler's livery grew very solemn and marched on the stage stiffly.

Eldon, speaking earnestly to Mrs. Vining, suddenly began to laugh softly. He laughed louder and louder and then plunged into the light.

By and by Miss Kemble hurried from her dressing-room, her maid in pursuit handing her her handkerchief and a fan. She was in great distress, and told the maid to run out and telephone. She paused to speak to Mrs. Vining, who asked, softly:

"How is the kiddie?"

"Not so well to-day."

Her painted face was taut with anxiety. Yet suddenly she shook her head as if to scatter gloom, moistened her lips, glanced over her costume, and entered a door. There was a sound as of rain on a roof—the audience greeting its faithful servant. Then Daphne heard that magic voice giving its strange felicity to that wonderful, "How d' you do?"

She marveled at the brain that could accomplish such mechanical perfection and give perennial freshness to the same cheap material with unfailing regularity. The harrowed mother in the wings became the mischievous girl on the stage by some abracadabra that Daphne could not grasp. Sheila was delighting the house. Muffled thunders followed nearly every line of hers.

A little later Eldon came off the stage, laughing. He dropped his laughter as he crossed the border and resumed his anecdote. "As I was saying—"



SHE wondered why she had entered upon this unnatural life. If she had sought admiration and fame she had not found them, for she sat alone in an isolated window.

But Mrs. Vining interrupted: "There comes my cue. How are They to-night?"

"Rather cold," said Eldon; "it's so hot."

"The swine!" said Mrs. Vining. Then she shook out her skirts, straightened up, and swept through the door like a dowager swan.

One of the box lights began to sputter, and Batterson dashed round from the other wing to curse the man in charge. He ran into Daphne, glared, and spoke harshly: "You needn't wait any longer."

Daphne swallowed her pride and slunk out.

Broadway was dull again. The mobs that had rolled down the cañon were housed in the theaters. Daphne was so restless that she ventured to squander a taxicab fare. The driver she beckoned to the curb had the look of a brigand and he skirted street-cars and other motors with a sickening recklessness. As they neared Central Park Daphne felt sure that he would dash on into its black forest with her and murder her in some dark ravine. He could so easily. She was not so enthusiastic about the privilege of being free of escort as she had thought she would be.

But the brigand deposited her at her door and accepted her ten-cent tip with a shy, sweet smile.

The apartment was deserted; the maid was out. Loneliness shrouded her. She imagined that she was a poor young actress stranded in a small hotel. New York had a village look at this point, and the uncrowded streets confirmed the likeness. She sat at the open window and stared down into Columbus Circle. Only the electric lights were busy. They blinked and darkled; words were spelled out a letter at a time, and erased with gloom. Pictures were drawn in running lights. Figures popped into view and were extinguished. All these electric giants were at work for the pigmy humans in the Circle. The street-cars came and went, swerving round the monument. An unceasing stream of taxicabs made a wide eddy and

sped up or down Broadway. Many people were going many places, but nobody was looking for Daphne.

She wondered why she had entered upon this unnatural life. If she had sought admiration and fame she had not found them, for she sat alone in an isolated window. She had alienated those who loved her without gaining a new friend, unless Tom Duane were one, and she was not sure of him, whether he were friend or enemy.

She was neither a working-woman nor a lady. She was a foolish, forlorn girl whom nobody approved and nobody understood.

She left the window and tried to study, to walk through her lines, but her distaste for them was like a nausea. She spun the victrola, gave it up for a book—a novel, about a man and a woman on a desert island. She felt that she was the woman and New York the island, and the man was—

She was awakened by the return of the family. They were all very gorgeous and they had had a joyous time. They told her that she had "missed it" and that she was a fool to work when she did not have to. She agreed with them.

CHAPTER XXVII

BUT if night brings counsel, morning brings action. She woke early again. It was just six o'clock. Daylight filled the room and it seemed ridiculous to lie asleep.

The street-cars and the traffic down below resounded like a brass band playing a quick march. She rose and went to the window. The scene was the same, but the soul was entirely altered; so vast a difference there was in spirit between blue moonlight and morning amber.

She remembered that her father would be arriving in two hours. She decided that it would be a pleasant duty to surprise the poor, old, neglected codger by meeting him.

She bathed and dressed and took the subway. Here under the ground the tube was full of people scurrying to their jobs. There were women innumerable. Daphne was not the first woman to be earning her living. Among the business women in her car were some who were sleepy-eyed and sullen with regrets of the night before. Some of them were already alert for flirtation, trying all the men's eyes, willing, ready to fence just for practice. Business had not robbed these at least of their primeval femininity.

At the Grand Central station Daphne was knocked about by the crowds plunging from the local train to a waiting express, and others dashing in the opposite direction.

She found that she was nearly an hour too early for the train. It amused her to take her breakfast at the

lunch-counter, to clamber on the high stool and eat the dishes of haste—a cup of coffee and a ham sandwich. It was pleasant to wander about alone in this atmosphere of speed, the suburban trains, like feed-pipes, spouting streams of workers, the out-bound trains drawing their passengers to far-off destinies as if by suction.

It was going to be a hot day. There was a menace in the air, a sting of humidity; the heat had a whip-lash to it that would sting and bite.

Daphne felt sorry for the poor army of workers. She thought of the shops and of the women who would spend there the earnings of these driven hordes. She was glad that she was no longer one of the loafers. Her poor father would not have to toil for her any more.

At length it was time for his train. She watched at the bulletin-board till the track number was announced and reiterated throughout the station by the megaphones that gave the walls speech. Daphne went to the rope barrier opposite the door of entry for that train and waited in ambush for her father.

A regiment of mixed souls marched up the platform. She recognized a few of her Cleveland friends; but did not call to them.

At length she made out a rather shabby man carrying his own luggage. It was her father. He looked older and seedier than she remembered. He did not expect to be met. He was looking idly at the new station. He had not been to New York since it had been thrown open.

He stared up at the golden zodiac, and marveled at the people walking, as if in air, on the glass corridors along the vast windows.

There was something quaint and rural about her father and about his upstaring awkwardness that struck Daphne as never before. But she saw that he had been through great trouble. That dignified him. She felt glad again that she was to do something to lighten his burden. She ran to him. He dropped his old suit-case on the toes of

the man following him and embraced Daphne with fervor. He devoured her with his eyes and kissed her again and told her that she was prettier than ever. All about them there were little groups embracing and kissing. There was a wonderful business in reunions.

When her father said, "I haven't had my breakfast. Have you?" she lied affectionately, "No."

"Let's have breakfast together."

"Fine," said Daphne. "We'll go to the Biltmore."

"Kind of expensive, isn't it?" he asked, anxiously.

"It's my treat," she said.

This amused him enormously. He guffawed and, picking up his baggage, started on.

"I'm going to treat you to a redcap, too," she said, snobbishly, as she beckoned to a porter.

Her father made a brief struggle: "It's very light."

"Let him take it," said Daphne. She saw that he was thinking of the tip. She was thinking of appearances, dreading to face the Biltmore bell-boys with a father who carried his own suit-case.

"So you're going to treat, eh?" Wesley laughed.

"Yep," she said.

"Where did you get all the money?"

"I'm a working-lady now."

He laughed again and shook his head over her.

They reached the hotel lobby by the underground pasage and a bell-boy snatched the suit-case from the porter. Daphne had to borrow a quarter from her father to tip the porter. He thought that a dime would have been enough, but he paid it. He was used to this sort of thing. They checked the suit-case with the hat-boy and Daphne borrowed a tip for the bell-boy. Later she would borrow a tip for the hat-boy and another for the footman who should put the suit-case in the taxicab.

"What did you mean by saying you were a working-lady?" said Wesley when they were seated at the table and breakfast was ordered. "Your mother wrote me some-

thing about having a little disagreement with you. She seemed to be right worried, so I thought I'd better run on to see if I couldn't sort of smooth things over. I'm glad you came to meet me. We can talk without interruption for once. Tell me all about it."

She told him the whole story of her decision to join the great social revolution that is freeing women from the slavery of enslaving the men. Her peroration was her new watchword: "I don't want to take any more money from you."

"Why, honey," he protested, "I love to give it to you. I only wish I had ten times as much. I couldn't dream of letting you work. You're too pirty. What's that young Wimburn cub mean by letting you work?"

"Oh, he's bitterly opposed to it, so I gave him back his ring."

"Well, I never!" he gasped. "And all this trip of your mother's and yours and all the expenses gone for nothing?" was his first doleful thought. He remembered the second mortgage he had placed on one of his properties to get the money for the vitally important wedding festival. And now there was to be no wedding. The son-in-law who was to have assumed the burden of Daphne's bills was banished. Daphne was again her father's own child.

He was glad to have her back, but he could have wished that she had not gone away, since he paid the freight in both directions. And now here was himself in New York and nothing to show for all the spilt milk of time, money, and emotion.

He was trying to be an uncomplaining, obedient, ideal American father, but he could not mimic enthusiasm over the investment. And he could not feel any confidence in Daphne's plans for supporting herself. He had put Bayard through college and into business and he knew all too well that a child of enterprise is more expensive to a parent than a lazy child or an invalid. Sons had once been pillars of strength to a father; latterly they had been

liabilities instead of assets. And now daughters were going to insist on being launched into financial seas!

At the critical moment Daphne mentioned that the star whose understudy she was would earn fifty thousand dollars that year in spite of the hard times. "Fifty thousand dollars" had a musical sound to Wesley's ears. If Daphne could earn a tenth of that he would believe in miracles.

He knew nothing of the theater. Its household words were unknown in his household. When Daphne spoke of Sheila Kemble and of the great Reben the names meant nothing to him. He asked which one of them was the manager.

He had understood that the stage was extremely wicked, but he had never understood how profitable it was to a few of its people. To earn fifty thousand dollars one must either be superhumanly wicked or not very wicked at all. But he was out of his depth, and he returned to a topic that he could discuss.

"Where were you planning to live, honey, while you're acting? With Bayard, I suppose."

"Oh no," said Daphne; "we've ruined his honeymoon enough already."

"Who with, then?"

"Oh, by myself, I suppose."

"Good Lord! you couldn't do that very well—a young girl like you."

"Why not?" she said.

He turned pale. This was like being asked why babies were found under cabbage leaves. He was an old-fashioned father, and he had never been able to rise to the new school of discussing vitally important topics with the children vitally interested.

"Why, why," he stammered, "why because nobody does it, honey. Nice girls don't live alone."

"Thousands of them do in this city."

"Not very nice ones, I guess—unless they're orphans."

"Well, suppose I were an orphan?"

"Then you'd have to, I suppose, though even orphans usually have some relatives."

Daphne studied him with a tender amusement. He was so innocent in his way, in spite of all he must know. She understood what he was thinking of. She was sophisticated in the manner of the nice girl of her time and she liked to treat submerged themes with clean candor. She thought that prudery was a form of slavery. But all she said was:

"You weren't afraid of Bayard's living by himself?"

"Of course not. He's a boy—a man."

"Isn't a man just as important as a woman?"

"Yes. No, there's a big difference."

"What?"

"Well, if a man is—er—does wrong it doesn't affect future generations so much."

"I should think it would."

"It's hard to explain."

"I think I know what you mean, but I don't think it's true."

He stared at her in terror.

She went on, relentlessly: "We've got to change that old idea of men keeping women in the dark because the women are too good to be trusted. I'm going to earn my living. I can't afford to support myself and a chaperon."

"If you've just got to stay in New York, and just got to work, your mother could stay with you, I suppose."

"But what becomes of you and your home?"

"Oh, I'll get along somehow. I don't matter."

This broke her heart. She cried out: "But you do matter, daddy; you matter terribly. Can't you understand, daddy, that I'm trying to relieve you and make myself useful instead of a parasite? Thousands of women live alone, professional women, art students, music students, college girls, normal-school women, besides the

women in shops and factories. It's coming more and more."

"But you're not brought up to a trade."

"I wish I had been."

"Well, that's a new complaint, anyway, but—well—of course you wouldn't do anything wrong; but if you lived alone you'd be misjudged, and men would keep throwing temptation in your way."

"I had plenty of that when I was living at home."

"Daphne!" He cried out in pain at the very thought.

She went on, educating him with a vengeance: "Plenty of temptation and plenty of opportunity, daddy. It wasn't your fault. You gave me all the protection that anybody could, daddy. But you can't protect people all the time. And it was when you trusted me most that you protected me most. People are just beginning to realize that even in penitentiaries, the higher the walls and the stricter the guards the more prisoners try to escape. They're sending convicts out to work on roads now with no guards at all. And they do their work and come back. Don't you think women can be trusted as far as convicts?"

"I suppose so," he sighed. But he was convinced of the security of neither the convicts nor of the women under these new anarchies. He was convinced of only one thing, and that was his helplessness. The problems confronting him were so terrifying and the clouds enveloping him so thick that he hardly noted what a breakfast he had eaten nor where it was served.

Daphne made a great flourish of paying for it. But she realized that, after all, she had not collected her first wages yet, and it was her father's money that she was spending. Still, it was a luxury for him to have some of his money lavished on himself. He got his Christmas and birthday presents so.

CHAPTER XXVIII

DAPHNE took him home in a taxicab. At the apartment they caught Bayard just rushing for his office. He greeted his father with whirlwind affection, but he knew that he would please Wesley better by hurrying on to his office than by neglecting his business for the purpose of entertainment.

Daphne was glad to see that her mother embraced Wesley with genuine warmth, even though she knew that he was welcomed as an ally against her.

Wesley took Leila by storm with his lavish and wholehearted praise. He had not seen her before. He gathered her to his breast, then held her out at arm's-length to praise her and to praise Bayard for bringing her into the family. And throughout the day he kept turning to her and patting her on the shoulder and saying how proud he was of her.

Mrs. Kip did not delay long the assault on Daphne's position. But Wesley said:

"We've had a long talk and I guess she's pretty set in her way. She's a good girl, though, mamma. And she knows her own mind better than we do. Anyways, it's her own mind. God forbid that I should try to dictate one of my children's lives. Let her have her way and if anything goes wrong she can always come back home."

His wife boiled over. It made her feel as much at home as an old kettle on a stove to have her husband there to boil over on: "Wesley Kip, are you going to sit there and encourage that girl to ruin her life and her reputation without doing anything to protect her?"

"Oh, I guess she's not going to ruin anything. After all, the best way to protect folks is to trust 'em."

It was bald plagiarism, but Daphne made no complaint. Wesley got into trouble at once, however, by making the suggestion that his wife remain as a companion for her child. Mrs. Kip took it as a sign that he wanted to get rid of her, and Daphne refused to take it at all.

Wesley sat pondering in silence for a while; then he rose and, mumbling, "Be back in a little while," took his hat and went out.

They wondered what mischief he was up to and what folly he would commit. He came back in half an hour with a smile of success.

"I guess it's all right. I been thinking about all the different things been said. We don't want Daphne living by herself and she don't feel like she ought to trespass on Leila's home; so I got an idea and went down and saw the janitor or superintendent or whatever he is, and I asked him mightn't it be there was somebody in this building wanted to rent a room to a nice girl. And he said there was a young couple felt the rent was a little high and had an extra room. So we went up and took a look at it. Right nice young woman, name of Chivvis or something like that; said she'd be glad to take my daughter in. Her husband has had reverses on account the hard times, and they had more space than they really needed. She showed me the room Daphne could have. Looked right comfortable. Not as nice furniture as this one, of course, but there's an elegant view. I was thinking that if Daphne was up there she could see Bayard and Leila when she was lonesome or anything; and she'd be handy where they could keep an eye on her if she got sick or anything."

The three women looked at him in amazement. He had solved the riddle that baffled them all, and had compromised the irreconcilables. The only question Daphne could think of was, "How much is it?"

"That's none of your business," Wesley said, with mock bravado. "I've got a right to pay your rent for a while yet. We fixed up the price all satisfactory, her and I."

"I'll bet the place is a sight and the woman a freak," said Mrs. Kip. "Let's go have a look at her."

So all four went up in the elevator to the top floor. They were about to ring the bell of one of the big front apartments like Bayard's, but Wesley checked them.

"It's in the back."

The women exhanged glances and smiles behind the important shoulder-blades of Wesley, the manager. He rang a bell and a young woman opened the door. As Leila said afterward:

"She had the whole map of New England in her face, and her middle name was Boston."

But she was young, in a placid, Puritanical way, and she looked exceedingly clean and correct. Her very smile was neat, exactly adjusted between those of the gracious hostess and of the landlady.

The living-room was furnished in impeccable taste, with quiet tones and pleasant primnesses of mahogany furniture and silver candlesticks.

Through the southern windows one looked out across miles on miles of peculiarly New York roofs, huge steeples of buildings, with a few church spires lost in the wells between them. Among so many so lofty structures the Metropolitan Tower and the wedge of the *Times* building seemed not far off. Even the Singer and the Woolworth buildings were visible miles below, the crowning peaks of a Sierra.

Mrs. Chivvis led the way to the room that was for rent. It took Daphne at once. Spotlessness is the first luxury in a rented room, and Puritan beauty has a grace all its own. The mahogany bed with its twisted posts, the excellent linen, and the honesty of everything won her completely.

She felt a sense of relief from the rather gaudy beauty of Leila's apartment. She felt that Mrs. Chivvis, who

showed such fine restraint in her furniture, would be equally discreet in minding her own affairs.

"I'll take it," she said; "that is, if you'll take me."

Mrs. Chivvis said that she would. She said it with a New-Englandish parsimony of enthusiasm, but her eyes were kindly, and Daphne decided that she thought nice things, but lacked the courage to say them.

As the four Kips were filing out, Daphne paused with a sharp gasp:

"Oh! By the way! Where do I— If—in case any one calls on me—where do I receive him?—her?—them!"

"In the parlor, of course," Mrs. Chivvis answered, frigidly. "You would hardly expect to receive them in—"

"Oh, of course not!" Daphne flared back; "but what about you and Mr. Chivvis?"

"We have our own room. We can sit there when you have callers."

Strange propriety of the plural! There is something shocking about "him" or "her," but "them" is pure. It is vague, neutral, and it has the pomposity of the editorial and the royal "we."

Daphne hung over the door-sill a moment, then asked: "But suppose that you and Mr. Chivvis have callers on the same evening when I happen to have a—er—callers?"

Mrs. Chivvis did not like to commit herself to a promise, because she kept her promises. Yet she did not want to lose a customer, so she said:

"Oh, we'll arrange that, have no fear. You would have the preference, of course, since you are paying us."

"We-ell, all ri-ight," Daphne drawled. "Good-by!"

When they returned to Leila's apartment she was still troubling over this dilemma. It is one of the chief annoyances and dangers of city life. Wesley said the most that could be said for the situation:

"Better try the place, honey. You might go further and get worse."

"That's so," said Daphne. And wondered if it were.

CHAPTER XXIX

DAPHNE moved at once into the Chivvis apartment what belongings she had brought on from Cleveland, and her mother promised to despatch the rest of them as soon as she reached home.

Wesley could not be persuaded to stay over an unnecessary night. His business was in a perilous condition. The mammoth Cowper firm had gone into bankruptcy owing him a handsome sum of money which he was not likely to recover. The failure also closed an important and profitable market for his calculating-machines. It frightened his banks as well, and he had wrestled like another Jacob with an almost invisible cashier for money enough to meet his pay-roll.

Yet he slipped a large bill into Daphne's hand when he bade her good-by at the station late in the afternoon, and he whispered to her that she should have other reinforcements whenever she called on him.

The farewells were harrowing. The situation was the exact opposite of what it should have been.

The scene should have been the dooryard of a dear old home, and Daphne should have been a boy with blue eyes and hair a trifle long at the nape, about to trudge away to the great city to make his fortune; he should have been pausing at the old gate and waving farewell to a humble father and to a plain old mother lifting her apron to her eyes while a shy little sister clung to her skirts.

But Daphne had reversed the traditions with a vengeance. She was the shy little sister, and she was putting her reluctant father and mother on the train in the

palatial station. Her mother was dressed in her metropolitan best. The daughter was shipping the parents home. They bothered her with their obsolete anxieties. She was on the way to fame and fortune.

And yet there were thundercaps enough in the sky and there were traps enough in the path of Daphne's fashionable feet. She never suspected just what they were. As usual, the dangers least regarded were the most grave. She kissed her parents good-by, and pooh-pooh'd their solemn faces. She laughed and flung them kisses and pretended to have no fears. But she had them in plenty, for she faced the world alone now, the more alone from the fact that Leila and Bayard were with her.

They regarded her with increasing uneasiness, wondering what trouble she would stumble into first. They had asked her to dine with them, but she gave another engagement as an excuse, knowing how well they would enjoy being alone together after the strain of a family visitation. But she had no other engagement.

She left her brother and his wife with a brisk assumption of important errands, but as soon as they were out of sight her pace slackened. Where was she to go?

She wished that she belonged to a club of some kind. Women's clubs were springing up rapidly, but Daphne was a stranger in town. She had no social prestige or achievement or friendships to guide her into the Colony Club or the Cosmopolitan. She had no diploma to help her into the Woman's University Club. She did not know of the Professional Woman's League, or the Twelfth Night, or the National Arts. If she had known of them, and had had sponsors to secure her election, she would still be outside them for some weeks.

She did not want to dine with the Chivvises, though she had arranged to take her meals there. She wanted to be free of relatives, but not without friends.

The world has still to arrange pastimes for workingwomen in their idle hours. A man can go anywhere, sit

about in a hotel lobby, drop into a pool-parlor or a saloon, lean on a rail and tell his troubles to a barkeeper, pick up acquaintances at his will. But a girl without acquaintances or family has hardly any facilities for making friends.

There were enough lonely men who would have been glad to cultivate so pretty a girl as Daphne and to pay all the expenses. Some of them, indeed, proffered their courtesies, but Daphne only despised them and ignored them, fled from them.

Clay Wimburn would have rejoiced to attend her and Tom Duane would have broken engagements at her summons. But she was in no humor to make advances to either of them. Clay was opposed to her career and Tom Duane was suspiciously interested in it. She was so desperate for something to do that she entered the Public Library and sat in the art-gallery for a while. When that was closed, she dined alone very slowly at a little restaurant. She reached the theater at seven o'clock and sat in the dark on a canvas rock, watching the stage-hands gather, and listening to their repartee.

Batterson arrived at length. He was in one of his humane moods. He asked Daphne if she had memorized her lines, and she said she had. He told her that he would give her another rehearsal the next day after breakfast. "After breakfast," he explained, was one o'clock P.M.

He asked Daphne if she knew anything about make-up, and she confessed that she did not. He beckoned to the girl she had seen appearing in the first act with a tennis-racket—Miss Joy Winsor her name was. Batterson introduced her and asked her to instruct Daphne in the A B C of her trade.

Miss Winsor rather terrified Daphne at first. She was playing a silly young girl, but she proved to be one of a class that has latterly turned to the stage in large numbers.

She was an earnest person, of excellent family, who had graduated from Wellesley College and then prepared herself for the theater as for a professorship. She had taken a course in a dramatic school and played all the great rôles there.

Then, as graduates do, having learned everything that teachers can teach, she began to learn for herself from the ground. She would probably never succeed in gaining favor or fortune, for she lacked magnetism and beauty, but she would have a livelihood and a measure of independence. She was a useful woman to the stage and would rarely be without employment.

She invited Daphne into her dressing-room and lectured her with a kindly condescension.

"Make-up is a science that no two people agree on. About all that you can be sure of is that your own skin will be ghastly unless you put two or three coats on it. Everything I learned at school I had to learn all over again, for I looked a fright at first.

"You have small and exquisite features, Miss Kip, and that's against you on the stage; and you have a fine skin that won't be of the slightest help. I'm not sure just how you ought to be made up, either. You're not my type at all, with your brown eyes and brows and your light hair. But let's see what we can figure out."

She opened a black tin box full of brushes, tubes, boxes, bottles, and rags.

"I use a grease-paint make-up that is very elaborate. I build a foundation of exora, then I use the lip-rouge for my face. But if I were you, I would go at it differently. You'd better omit the grease-paint. First put a cap on your hair, then cold-cream your face and massage it well, so that you can work in the make-up. Then wipe the cold-cream all off. It's a very messy business, you see. Then take a swan's-down puff and powder your face completely with pink powder. I use a dark-cream color, but I think a pink would suit you better. Then put on a dry

rouge of a light shade—number eighteen would be about right for you. Put that on over your eyes and temples and carry it all round the cheek. With a face shaped like yours you ought to carry the red well down, to take away that jaw line. It is very fine and beautiful now, but across the footlights it would look rather sharp, I'm afraid.

"Then rouge your ears and leave them quite red. Blue-pencil your eyelids, upper and lower both. Smooth the blue in with your fingers. You've got to learn how to blend it all so that everything shades off into the rest. Then powder again.

"Then take a baby's hair-brush like this and dust off all the extra powder. Then brush out your eyebrows with an eyebrow brush. Then go over the brows with a brown eyebrow pencil and accentuate the lines and bring them lower on the sides.

"Now take another little brush and put a dark-brown mascaro on your eyelashes. I don't think you ought to use a black mascaro with your eyes. Some women take a hair-pin and build each eyelash out, bead it with cosmetic. But that's more for the comic-opera stage. For the legitimate we use a softer treatment.

"Then take a little lip rouge on your finger-tip and rub it in the edges of the nostrils. And put a little red line from your nose to your lips and put a little red spot in the inner corner of each eye to brighten the shadow.

"Be very careful about making up your mouth. Don't rob it of its character. On the comic-opera stage they dab on what they call the Cupid's bow; but you don't want to look like a doll, and your mouth is so beautiful that all you have to do is to paint it so that it will carry through that terrific wall of light between you and the audience.

"My mouth is too big, so I cut it off and forget it about here on each side and I put little smile lines at the corner. You don't need them.

"Before you rouge your lips rub them perfectly dry, then dip your little finger into the rouge-box and work the color in very carefully. The bright carmine is the right rouge for you. I use a darker shade.

"Now you take the rabbit's foot and retouch your cheeks with rouge till you get the right degree of red—that depends on the light. For a bright scene use a great deal of rouge; for a dark scene very little.

"When you play in a strange theater ask about the house lights and tone your make-up accordingly. Use a liquid white on your neck and arms, and whiten the backs of your hands and rouge your palms a little and also your finger-tips. And I think that's about all."

"Good Lord! It's enough!" gasped Daphne, who had listened with growing bewilderment. "I didn't know I had to be a house and sign painter. I'll never remember half of it."

Miss Winsor smiled with professional calm: "I'd make you up now to show you, but I haven't time. I'll come early to-morrow evening. If you want to, you can bring your own make-up material and I'll make you up a few times. Then you can experiment by yourself and have your friends tell you how you look from the front. It's very hard to tell, and it's hard to keep it regular."

"How much will the outfit cost?"

"That depends, of course. Five or six dollars will get everything you need." She found a pencil and made out the list for Daphne. Then she said: "Now I've got to make up my own phiz. You can stay and watch me if you want."

"You're awfully kind."

"Everybody is kind on the stage except when you become dangerous. Then it's only business to look out for Number One."

Daphne sat down, and Miss Winsor whipped off her street clothes, put on a cap, and began to smear her face with exora. It was soon ruined beyond recognition, like

a fresh oil-painting that a disgusted artist reduces to chaos.

At length her features began to come back in blotches, gross and unreal as a caricature. Daphne watched her, trying to remember the successive steps.

"Were you terribly afraid the first time you acted?" she asked.

"Was I afraid?" Miss Winsor threw her eyes up. "I played a housemaid the first time, and I shivered so I dropped my tray and stood on it while I tried to pick it up. I've had two operations, but they were nothing. You can't take ether for your first performance, you know. Fact is, I'm scared to death every night. You never get over it, for every audience is unlike every other audience."

"What did the audience do when you dropped your tray?"

"Oh, it just laughed. And then I spoke my cue instead of my line. You ought to have seen the face of the poor fellow who was playing opposite to me when he heard me say, 'Is your mistress at home?' I swore I'd never appear before another audience, but I had to. My father had spent so much money educating me, and I'd insisted on going on the stage, and he educated me for that, and then he lost his health and his salary and he had a long string of other children, so I had to stay where I was. It's a nice life, though, in a lot of ways. It has its bad points, but what life hasn't?"

"How long have you been on the stage—if you don't mind my asking?"

"Three years."

Daphne wanted to ask how much salary she was getting, but she did not quite dare. Miss Winsor volunteered the information indirectly.

"Reben has promised me sixty-five dollars next season, and we're booked for forty weeks sure."

Daphne pondered. Miss Winsor with all her equipment had been acting for three years. She made about

twenty minutes' appearance altogether on the stage each evening, and was to get sixty-five dollars a week for forty weeks. She must be getting about fifty dollars a week now. Daphne managed to calculate without pencil and paper that forty times fifty would be around two thousand dollars a year.

That was a long way from the fifty thousand that Sheila Kemble was reported to earn. And suppose Miss Winsor did not play forty weeks a year. Daphne imagined that few people did. She remembered overhearing one actor say to another in the wings that a friend of his had played only eight weeks in two years. She began to wonder what chance she had.

She sat in Miss Winsor's room and thought of the good and the bad phases of stage life. She knew little about money, never having earned any or kept any accounts. She knew nothing of comparative wages or living expenses. She knew nothing of her own abilities except that she had begun with a dazzling failure even at rehearsal. The worst of it was, that she felt within her no crying need to express her personality before the public. In fact, she rather liked to keep her personality to herself.

She watched Miss Winsor finish the canvas of her own face. That loathsome task would have to be gone through before every performance. Miss Winsor spent an hour getting ready for her twenty minutes of acting. She would spend half an hour more, no doubt, removing what she had so toilsomely constructed.

Miss Winsor put on her white stockings and her rubber-soled tennis-shoes and took up her racket. It seemed extraordinarily foolish to Daphne. They walked out into the wings. The same overture was playing remotely. The same actors were waiting. The curtain went up with the same swish.

Miss Winsor whispered "Good-by!" nervously, then took the hand of the highly painted young man in tennis costume, and skipped out into the light. Daphne heard

her saying the same speeches she said before. The actor who was a butler straightened his shoulders and stalked on. Eldon, chatting with Mrs. Vining, began to laugh; then he entered. When he came off, Mrs. Vining asked him how they were to-night."

"Willing, but slow," said Eldon.

That business of saying the same lines over and over again depressed Daphne to-night. Miss Winsor, she noted as she listened, was a "feeder." Daphne did not know the technical term, but she realized the effect. Miss Winsor kept asking foolish questions and somebody else made the answers that brought the laughs.

Daphne was losing heart. She had been attracted by the velvet of the stage. Now she was seeing the knotty side, the labor of the looms.

Daphne left the theater in a state of blues. She walked home in a cloud. She noticed at length that some man was at her side muttering something. She realized with a start that he had been at her elbow for some time. She had no sense of lofty pride. She turned on him with a sick disgust and snapped:

"Oh, let me alone!"

He dropped back into oblivion.

CHAPTER XXX

SHE reached her apartment without further molestation and opened the door with her latch-key. She found the Chivvises in their parlor, seated at the center-table in front of a number of papers. She started to back out, but Mrs. Chivvis rose quickly and presented her husband.

He was Mrs. Chivvis in male form. He was evidently shocked by Daphne's beauty. Mrs. Chivvis started to gather up the papers.

"We were just going over our monthly accounts," she said. "Sit down."

"Can't stop, thanks," said Daphne, and went to her own room. She picked out the part Miss Winsor was playing and began to study it, whispering the lines over to herself. She had said them already scores of times. If she was called on to play the part she might say them scores of times more and she would have to smear and unsmear her face forever.

She was going to do all this in order to lighten the burdens of her father and her husband. Her father had gone home in a state of melancholia and her expected husband was avoiding her. He was with another girl, probably—a girl with Leila's philosophy of life; the way to win a man and keep him won is to make him work and work him.

The Chivvis apartment was a triumph in the transmission of sound and Daphne could vaguely hear them murmuring. Evidently they were going over their accounts and discussing their financial prospects. They were making an evening's entertainment of it. Bayard

and Leila would have taken as much pleasure in visiting a hospital.

Daphne heard Chivvis' voice rise above the mumble in a note of ecstasy.

"Oh, jolly! If we do without that we can put eighteen dollars a month more in the savings-bank."

"Fine! Beautiful!" Mrs. Chivvis cried, with equal rapture.

Their feast was turning into a little orgy of book-keeping.

Daphne smiled with a quiet contempt. She felt a repugnance toward the cheese-parers. She wondered why. She had felt repugnance, also, for Leila's ruthless extravagance.

The following morning Daphne went to a drug-store and bought everything on the list Miss Winsor gave her, including a black tin box. She felt as proud as a boy with a chest of tools. She was an actress now. She had the machinery and a place in the shop. The next thing was a bit of work to do.

She spent the forenoon in her room, experimenting with make-up. She reduced herself to a freshly painted chromo and put some of Mrs. Chivvis' towels in such a state that she washed them out herself.

At one o'clock she presented herself to Batterson and endured one of his rehearsals, with his assistant reading all the cues in a lifeless voice. Batterson was more discouraged than she was. He showed it for a time by a patience that was of the sort one shows to a shy imbecile.

He was so restrained that Daphne broke out for him, "Do you think I am a complete idiot, Mr. Batterson?"

"Far from it, my dear," said Batterson. "You are a very intelligent young woman. The trouble is that you are too intelligent for the child's play of the stage. It's all a kind of big nursery, and you can't forget that facts are not facts in this toy game. If you could let yourself go,

and be foolish and play doll-house you might succeed. It's hard even when you know how. But it's impossible as long as you try to reason it out. It's like music and fiction and all the arts. You've got to pretend or you can't feel and you can't make anybody else feel."

And that, indeed, was Daphne's agony. She could not release her imagination or command her clear vision to see what was not there.

"Shall I give up, then?" said Daphne.

"I wish you would," said Batterson.

"Then I won't," said Daphne.

Batterson laughed. "You may get it yet. It might come to you all of a sudden and knock you all of a heap."

Days passed, and she went on perfecting herself in the lines till she could rattle them off like a parrot. She had a good memory; she could understand what she was told to do, and could go through all the motions. But she could not surrender her spirit to it.

She ceased to be nervous and grew dogged. Batterson told her at last that she could give a good workman-like performance of any of the parts. She emphasized the words he told her to emphasize and moved from position to position, according to instructions. That was something, but it was not much.

Night after night she reported at the theater and left it when the curtain rose. On one of these evenings Tom Duane met her outside the stage door. His apology was that he felt it his duty to look after his client.

He invited Daphne to ride home in his car, which was waiting at the curb. She declined with thanks. He urged that she take a little spin in the Park. She declined without thanks. He sighed that it was a pity to lose the moonlight.

She said she would get enough when she walked home. He asked if he might "toddle along." She could hardly refuse without crassly insulting him.

He dismissed his car and they strolled up Broadway. He proffered her refreshments of various kinds at all the restaurants. She shook her head. He invited her to go to one of the dancing-places with him. She refused even that.

But as they sauntered, they passed a drug-store, largely occupied by an enormous, ornate soda-fountain of imitation marble. It had as many stops as a pipe-organ and a squad of white-coated ganymedes played fearful and wonderful tunes on it, producing dozens of combinations of cold and wet and sweet and bubblesome for the seduction of the palate and the destruction of the rest of the digestive apparatus.

"I would accept an invitation to one of those," said Daphne, indicating the flying concoctions.

Duane flinched, but he said, "Then I suppose I'll have to invite you."

She noted his uncharacteristic reluctance and asked, "Are you afraid to be seen in there?"

"Not exactly afraid. I am absolutely fearless, but—"

"Ashamed, then?"

"Perhaps. That's about the only reputation I have left to lose. Let's go in and lose it."

They crowded up to the bar and Daphne selected a raspberry sundæ and Duane ordered a French vichy.

"Don't you really care for this sort of thing?" said Daphne. "It's beautiful—the ice-cream with the fresh raspberries."

Duane blushed. "As a matter of fact I should like it very much. As a boy I used to sit up to the soda-fountain with the best of them. But I'm not brave enough now. There are all sorts of cowards, but the men who are afraid to acknowledge their sweet tooth are the lowest of all, and I'm one of them."

She could not persuade him to bravery, and they left the place. They loitered slowly up the quiet reach of Seventh Avenue. He questioned her about her work with all the

grateful flattery there is in an appetite for another's autobiography. She found it easy to tell him of her difficulties. He extracted encouragement or indirect compliment out of all of them.

When they arrived at her apartment-house she said, "Sorry I can't ask you up, but I have no reception-room, and I'm tired out."

"You have wasted enough of your time on me," he said. "I'll see you to the elevator."

As Daphne stepped into the hallway she found Clay Wimburn there, waiting grimly. He sprang to his feet with a gasp of relief. He caught sight of Duane and his joy died instantly.

Daphne, rushing forward to greet him, felt checked by his sudden ice. She burned with rage at the irony of all those lonely homecomings ending in this sudden embarrassment of escort. Clay growled at Duane.

"Hello, Duane!"

Duane smiled back. "Hello, Wimburn!" He saw that Daphne was confused and he bade her good night and smiled again. "'Night, Wimburn."

He could afford to be light. He had nothing to lose.

Wimburn envied him his flippant graces and hated him for them. Wimburn loved Daphne and wanted her for his own. He had counted her his own, and still had neither refunded the engagement-ring nor paid for it. Daphne was more pleased with Wimburn's misery than with Duane's felicity.

"Won't you come up, Clay?" she asked.

He murmured, "Can we be alone for a little talk?"

"I'm afraid not. The Chivvises, you know."

He cursed inwardly. He remembered that piazza in Cleveland, and in all the other American communities except this horrible New York—a ghastly city without a front porch or a hammock.

"Will you take a little walk with me in the Park?"

"All right," she said as she led the way out into the

street. "I'm pretty tired, though. I walked home from the theater."

"With Duane!" Clay snarled. "You weren't too tired for that."

Daphne thought of the motor ride and the supper she had declined. She said, "Are you dragging me out here for the sake of a fight?"

"There'll be no fight if you'll cut out that man Duane."

"Am I to have no friends at all?"

"You can have all you want, provided—"

"You select them. Look here, Clay, Mr. Duane got me my job. He got it twice. I can't insult him even to please you. If we were married you'd expect me to let you run your business your own way. I've got to run mine mine."

"You have no business to have any business," he struck out, fiercely. "Why can't you marry me and settle down to be a normal, decent little wife?"

"Really, Clay," she gasped, "if you're going back to start all over again you'll have to choose some other time. I'm worn out and I've got to study."

She faced about and began to retrace her steps, Clay following and not knowing which of his grievances to speak of first. Daphne meant better than she sounded when she said:

"Let me give you one little hint, Clay, for your own information. Every time this Mr. Duane that you're so afraid of meets me he does his best to help me get my chance and he tells me only pleasant things. Every time you've come to see me lately you've been either a sick cat or a roaring tiger."

She was planning to urge him to help her and make their meetings rosier. But, lover-like, he took umbrage and pain and despair from her advice, and since they were again at the vestibule he sighed, "Good night, Mrs. Duane," and flung out into the dark.

Daphne sighed, and the poor elevator-man who saw so much of this sort of thing sighed with her and for her.

CHAPTER XXXI

ALL this while Daphne was kept in readiness to take Miss Kemble's part in case the illness of her child should result in death and in the further case that she should be unable to finish her performances. With the theatrical season in such bad estate and most of Reben's other companies and theaters losing money heavily, Sheila Kemble was his one certain dependence. He called her his breadwinner.

For that reason she kept on playing, since her defection would not only throw out of employment her own entire troupe and close the theater, but it would cripple Reben and rob all his companies of their salaries. In better seasons he would have dismissed the audience in her absence. But he had no intention of returning the money of any thousand-dollar house once it was in the box-office.

Miss Kemble's baby passed the crisis and recovered. And then the mother, worn out with the double strain, caught a little chill that became a blinding, choking cold. She went through the Saturday matinée in a whisper, but the night performance was beyond her.

And now at last Daphne's chance arrived. The Saturday-night house was enormous in spite of the heat. There were enough people there to make fourteen hundred dollars—twenty-five hundred on the day.

Daphne, trudging to the theater for her usual stupid rebuff, walked into this crisis of her life.

Reben himself knocked at her dressing-room door where Miss Winsor was helping her with her make-up. He implored her to be calm, and he was so tremulous that he

stuttered. He told her that if she made good he would let her play the part till Miss Kemble got well. He would pay her a handsome bonus. He would put her out at the head of a Number Two company next season.

Batterson came at last and ordered him off the stage. Reben obeyed him. Then Batterson talked to her. He told her that there was no reason to fear the house. A Saturday-night audience was always easy. It wanted its money's worth! It would help to get it.

He told her a story to prepare her for the view of the house: "Gus Thomas," he said, referring to the distinguished playwright, "was telling me once why he is always so easy when he makes a speech. 'I was at a county fair once,' he says, 'and one of the men says, "Come with me, and I'll show you the greatest sight you ever saw," he says, and he took me,' Gus says, 'to a hall where they had ten thousand tomato-cans in a pyramid. He was disappointed because I didn't get excited,' Gus says. '"Isn't it wonderful?"' he says. '"But it don't seem to mean much to you,"' he says to Gus, and Gus says, '"As a matter of fact, it doesn't. I shouldn't be greatly impressed by a single tomato-can,"' says Gus, '" so why should I get excited over ten thousand tomato-cans?"' And he said that was how he felt when he faced a big audience. 'I shouldn't be afraid of any one person there,' Gus says, 'so why should I be afraid of a thousand persons?' I've kind of lost the gist of it and there's everything in the way Gus tells it. But you see what I mean, don't you?"

"I see," said Daphne. "I'm not afraid of the audience."

"Then what on earth are you afraid of?"

"I'm afraid of me!"

Batterson laughed scornfully. "Oh, you! You're going to score a knock-out. You're going to make a big hit!"

"Yes," said Daphne, "so you've always told me."

There was something dreadful about her calm. It baffled him and it astounded Miss Winsor. Old Mrs. Vining tried to mother the girl, but fell back thwarted by Daphne's unholy repose. She was like a race-horse groomed for a big handicap. Since all the odds were against her, her victory would be the more thrilling. But she should have been wildly restive, reckless, plunging, almost unmanageable. It was the worst of omens that she was unruffled, sedate, thoughtful.

The curtain rose. Miss Winsor and the young man skipped on to their job; the butler stalked; Eldon entered and made his exit. Mrs. Vining spread her skirts and sailed on, then Eldon went back. Finally Daphne's cue came.

She was startled a little as Batterson nudged her forward. She went to the door and opened it on her new career to make her public début with the all-important "How d' you do?"

She saw before her the drawing-room in a weird light. Beyond it was a fiercely radiant fog and beyond that an agglomeration of faces—the mass of tomato-cans that she was not going to be afraid of.

And she was not afraid. She was curious to study them. She was eager to remember her lines. And she remembered them. The cues came more or less far apart and each evoked from her mind the appropriate answer. She made never a slip, and yet she began to realize that Mr. Eldon seemed unhappy.

At length she realized that the audience was strangely quiet. A sense of vaulty emptiness oppressed her. She went on with her lines. She understood at last that she was getting no laughs. She was not provoking those punctuating roars that Sheila Kemble brought forth. The audience had evidently had a hard week.

She decided that she must be playing too quietly; she quickened her tempo and threw more vivacity into her manner. She moved briskly about the scene, to Eldon's bewilderment. He seemed unable to find her.

But the audience grew still more quiet. Then it grew restless. She heard some one coughing, then several coughing. It seemed that every one had caught cold suddenly. She lifted her voice to drown the competition.

When at length it came time for her exit she remembered clearly how Sheila Kemble had drawled part of her speech, opened the door a little, murmured the finishing words, and slipped out. Such delicacy would plainly never do with these Saturday-night cattle, Daphne was sure, so she read her last line with vigor as she moved out. And she slammed the door to give emphasis to the joke. The door resounded as in an abandoned home. The applause that Sheila Kemble always won did not follow Daphne off.

She caught an expression of sick fatigue on Batterson's face. Miss Winsor ran to her and said, with forced enthusiasm:

"Splendid! You were wonderful! You didn't miss a line."

Daphne felt the dubious compliment this was and answered, "But I missed every laugh."

"Oh, you can't expect to do everything at once."

Batterson said, "You're all right." But there was a funereal gloom in his tones.

She knew that he was trying to buoy her up. She had all the rest of the evening to get through.

She went through to the bitter end and spoke every line. But the audience was not with her for a moment. She used all her intellect to find the secret of its pleasure, but she could not surprise it. She tried harder and harder, acted with the intense devotion of a wrestling-bout, but she could not score a point.

The company looked worried and fagged. The audience would not rise to anything—humor, pathos, thrill. When the play was over every one seemed to avoid her.

She rubbed off her make-up and resumed her mufti.

As she walked out on the darkened stage she saw Batterson. He tried to escape, but she checked him.

"Tell me frankly, Mr. Batterson, what was the matter with my performance to-night."

"Come to the office Monday and we'll have a little talk."

"And I'll get my notice."

"I didn't say that."

"But you meant it. Anyway, tell me the truth."

"Who knows the truth? I don't. If you want my opinion, I can tell you that."

"I do want it. Be honest with me."

"My honest opinion is that your undoubted charms and gifts are peculiarly suited to somewhere else than the stage. I did not see one glimmer of theatrical intuition or suggestion in your performance to-night."

"Can't I acquire them?"

"You might—in a thousand years. But I doubt it. It's no insult to you, Miss Kip; we can't all have all the gifts. I'm a good stage-manager, if I do say it, but everybody says I'm a rotten bad actor. I know all about it, but I can't do it. You're the same way, I fancy."

"What would you honestly advise me to do?"

"I understand that you don't have to act. Go home and get married."

"I won't."

"Then go home and don't get married."

"I won't go home."

"There's one other place to go. Good night."

He walked off, and she was left alone. The last scene had been struck and piled up against the back wall as the fire laws required. The stage-hands had gone. The last of the actors had gone. The doorkeeper was in his little alley.

She had the stage to herself. She stood in the big void and felt alien—forever alien. She shook her head. This place was not for her. She had been tried in the balance

and found wanting. She wondered if there were anywhere a balance that she could bring down.

She felt useless, purposeless, and very much alone. She went out and bade the doorkeeper not "Good night!" but "Good-by!"

She dreaded the forlorn journey home to her dreary room. As she stepped out of the door some one moved forward with uplifted hat. It was Tom Duane. He looked very spick and span. His smile illumined the dull street and his hand clasped hers with a saving strength. It lifted her from the depths like a rope let down from the sky.

CHAPTER XXXII

DAPHNE would have been more content if Duane had been Clay Wimburn. It was Clay's duty to be there at such a time, of all times.

Of course he did not know that this night was to be crucial for her, but he should have known. Mr. Duane knew. Some instinct had told him that she would be desperately blue and peculiarly in need of help. If anybody had to throw her a rope it should have been her betrothed. If he did not feel her need of him and did not carefully happen to be there, perhaps it was because he was not mystically suited to be her soul companion, after all.

And perhaps Mr. Duane was divinely indicated. At that age girls are apt to believe that the selection of their lovers is a matter which is keeping Heaven up of nights. They find hints and commands in little things; nearly everything is an augury.

If a Roman general would postpone a battle because a sheep's liver was larger on the right than on the left side, it is small wonder if a susceptible girl pays regard to the astonishing fact that one man instead of another comes at her unvoiced wish, like a familiar angel—or demon.

It never occurred to Daphne that Reben had warned Duane of the début of his protégée and had invited him—in fact, had dared him—to watch the test of her abilities.

All she knew was that Duane was proffering homage and smiles and the prefaces of courtship. Daphne might have failed to gain the hearts of her audience, for all her toil, but here was a heart that was hers without effort.

Perhaps Duane was her career. He was at least an audience that she could sway. And she was miserably in need of some one that would pay her the tribute of submission.

So now when he said, "Won't you let me take you home in my car?" she could hardly snub a Heaven-sent messenger.

She said, "Thank you—you're very kind—but— Oh, all right!" And she bounded in. She did not have to slink home. She was translated in a chariot. It was pleasant to move in a triumphal vehicle up Broadway where she was accustomed to walk or take a street-car or a dingy taxicab.

The night was triumphantly beautiful. She noted with reluctance how swiftly the dragon of speed devoured the space between her and her apartment cell.

When Duane said: "You must be hungry after all that hard work. Aren't you?" she said, "Yes, I guess I am—a little."

When he said, "Where shall we eat?" she answered, "Anywhere."

"Claremont?" he suggested.

This startled her, gave her pause. Yet there was something piquant about the proposal.

Satan or Raphael had whispered to her an invitation to revisit the scene of her late humiliation with Clay. With Duane's magic purse there would be no danger of a snub from the waiters; with his own car there would be no risk of footing it home.

There were many respects that made her recoil from the suggestion, but there were others that made it attractive. She did not speak till he urged again.

"Claremont?"

Then an imp of mischief spoke for her, and said, "All right!"

Duane told the chauffeur and the car shot like a javelin

from the lighted street into the deep forest-night of Central Park.

What would Clay say? But, after all, he had failed her in a crisis. Perhaps he had turned his heart elsewhere. Men were impatient, vindictive, fickle.

On the shadowy paths that bordered the roadways park benches were aligned. On nearly all of them shadowy men were embracing ghost-girls. Perhaps one of the men was Clay Wimburn. Her heart winced with jealous fear. But, after all, she had freed him from their betrothal.

And in freeing him had she not freed also herself?

CHAPTER XXXIII

AT half an hour before midnight a large part of the amorous population of Central Park has usually dispersed to its several homes. But on warm evenings there are numerous lingerers, pitiful couples who have no other place for their communion than a bench of Spartan upholstery with a patrolman for chaperon.

In the lamplight the parties to these courtships may prove to be laborers and shop-girls, street-car conductors and housemaids, but in the bosky dusk they have the investiture of poetry. They sit locked in each other's arms, mutually enhanced and deceived by the gloom. The Park is a huge nursery of romance, with no less of good fruit and no more evil than the small-town verandas and the country lanes.

Duane must have felt the influence of so much love-making, for the car had not gone a great distance before his heart was uneasy—normally uneasy.

He tried to word his feelings as diplomatically as possible lest he startle Daphne, and as softly as possible lest he entertain the chauffeur:

"Just remember, please," he said, "that it's only my promise that keeps me from—from— Well, I wish you would release me. This moonlight is stronger than I am. You aren't really hard-hearted enough to make me keep my distance, are you?"

"Oh yes, I am!" Daphne answered, with some asperity.

She did not like the implication. He had not spoken the definite words, but he had groped for them. "Hug" and "kiss" and "spoon" are such coarse terms for such

delicate deeds that they almost contradict what they define.

In broad daylight or before a crowd only a frantic fool would commit the tender nonsense that a man must be very foolish or craven or very honorable not to commit in the gloaming and the solitude. Words are like light; their flash-lamps throw out in stark realisms what shadow had draped into romance.

Duane should have waited longer and let the moonlight carry his hand to Daphne's. If there had been any chance for him, or if she had been lonely and forlorn enough, then she could have consented to the handclasp or crept into his arm for a little shelter. But his words had ruined the chance.

He spoke, and she could only answer with denial. Perhaps that was why he spoke. Perhaps he meant to lay that promise like a sword between them.

But whatever his motive, as soon as he opened the subject she closed it. For the rest of the journey he sat as far from her as the seat permitted, and he left her to the mercy of her thoughts and the moon.

The moon was potent. She gave light, but not too much of it—a kind of tremulous, luminous, shadowy, silvery bloom. The moon does not care who they are that wander together in her meadows. As magnetism grips and weds any two bits of iron that come within reach of its outstretched hands, so under the moon's sway dalliance becomes a need, a demand as much as thirst under a broiling sun.

Daphne sat in her corner, brooding on her plight. The moon numbers women among her best clients, and Daphne— But there is an old tradition that forbids one to regard what is called a good girl with any mercy. Foibles are not permitted to her. She is never tempted. She has not even the glory of conquering a temptation, for she must never feel one.

Perhaps it is advisable that this tradition should be preserved, though it must work a cruel injustice on those noble women who have themselves to fight as well as the world, and who grow strong by conquest or, better yet, prove their wisdom in conversing with temptation only at long-distance rates.

But, however it may be with heroines and saints, the average woman is just as amorous as the average man, just as mischievous, and in her own way nearly as adventurous. It is one of the most arrant hypocrisies of fiction and one of the worst venerable lies of custom to pretend that a woman is always overpowered by a man's strength or lured by his wiles, deceived by his false promises or betrayed by her own superlative altruism.

Now that women are swapping their privileges for their rights, they must claim the lofty honor of being responsible for their own sins—at least as far as anybody is responsible for anything.

In all the other realms of nature the female considers and compares and selects. In the scheme of nature desire, ambitious desire, was just as important to Daphne's soul as to any male's.

There is nothing wicked or unwomanly about this. The woman who does not try to love to her own advantage and her imaginable children's advantage is a dolt, or a wanton, or both. If she is to choose, she must sometimes change; she must sometimes select the best man available until a better comes along, then, in the period allowed to her, she must relinquish her option on the earlier and offer herself to the better.

And all this involves a certain amount of legitimate, business-like cunning and plotting and pondering. It takes place behind the screen of her face, which is her shop window. She decides in the office of her soul to mark herself up for select custom, or moderately as a staple article for the general trade, or at so much off for shop-wear or factory-flaws.

Daphne Kip was no heroine of fiction. She was an average girl of the twentieth century with a little more than the average independence and initiative.

It is impossible to know what she was thinking in that long ride through the moon-enchanted glades of Central Park with a most attractive young man sitting idle at her side. It would be impertinent to assume that she felt, as he did and as the disappointed chauffeur did, that it was a terrible waste of a g eaming opportunity. It would be outrageous to imagine her thinking Duane what he may have thought himself—a ninny for keeping any mere parole given under duress.

It would be a basely cynical insolence to wonder if she were not realizing the manifest truth that the man she had been (but was not now) engaged to was absent and unsympathetic, and the man she was with was handsomer, richer, more considerate, more gallant, more profitable in every way as a companion.

If Daphne had been assailed by any such thoughts surely she would have been horrified by them. She must have dismissed them with shame; she could only have resolved that this young man was a dangerous neighbor and one to be avoided.

It is unsafe to say more than that the ride was long and beautiful, and that no caresses were attempted, no words exchanged. The bored chauffeur, whose wind-shield served as a perfect mirror, saw nothing in it but a young man and a young woman clinging to the opposite extremes of a leather divan drawn through the woods at thirty miles an hour.

When Claremont was reached and Duane handed Miss Kip out he noted that her hand was hotter than his own and a little quick to escape, her face was flushed, and her lips parted as if with excitement. He assumed that the speed of the ride and the tang of adventure were to blame.

The head waiter and all the crew received Mr. Duane

with distinction and served him with alacrity when he was seated at the best of the vacant tables. It was the same table he had occupied with Miss Kemble and Mr. Reben.

A vast amount of water had flowed through the deep valley of the Hudson since that night when Daphne had sat in the same scene and watched poor Clay Wimburn quarrel with the waiter and fish out the last of his money. A vast amount of experience had flowed through the deep valley of her soul since then and she had drifted on the current many miles from where she had been then.

Duane and the head waiter collaborated earnestly over an ideal supper. When it was selected Duane turned to Daphne to ask:

"And what wine?"

"None, thanks!"

"Oh, a little!"

"I'd rather not. I never do."

"But I'm as thirsty as the— I'm thirsty."

"You have what you want. I really never."

He ordered for himself, but not a half-bottle. Then he gave her the floor with a brisk and kind-hearted falsehood:

"Now tell me all that happened. I tried to be there, but I had an engagement I couldn't break, and I got round just as the curtain was falling. Was it a great success?"

This was diplomacy on his part. He had been present at her début, and had been tormented by her failure. But he had taken none of that comfort which we are said to find in the misfortune of our friends. He had blamed her no more for her inability as an actress than he would have blamed a rose for not being a sword. He had suffered agonies at her peculiar inappropriateness to the stage, and he had had no answer for Reben's taunts when the curtain dropped on her fiasco.

But he had felt the impulse to help her through the aftermath of her humiliation, and he had gone to the

stage door to lie in wait for her. His motive was one of exquisite kindliness.

If after his kindliness had led him to her rescue his flirtatiousness took advantage of the opportunity and urged him to console her with lover-like attentions that was not the fault of the kindly part of him.

It was the Samaritan Duane that now offered her the chance to sustain her pride. When she surprised him by telling him the truth he was thrown into confusion.

While the waiters were serving the supper and while he was attacking it with the frank appetite of honest hunger, she recounted the evening's disaster as calmly as if it were the story of somebody else. In fact, she was standing off and regarding herself with the eyes of an alien. We change so fast that the persons we were yesterday are already strangers, and their acts the acts of distant relatives. Her calm was really the numbness of shock. The anguish would come to-morrow.

"I can't understand myself at all," Daphne said. "I went through every one of the motions, but I couldn't reach the audience once. I was like a singer with a bad cold singing in a foreign language—you don't know what the song is all about, but you know that it never quite gets on the key."

He tried to help her: "Oh, the first performance is no test. You were so excited that you weren't yourself."

"That's just the trouble," Daphne protested. "I wasn't excited and I was myself. If I could have been somebody else—the character I was playing, or an imitation of Sheila Kemble playing it, I might have come somewhere near something. But I couldn't throw myself into it. I couldn't throw myself away. Part of me kept saying: 'This is all nonsense. Those children out there are all grown up. You can't fool them with your make-believe.' You see, I've got no imagination. I never had. I'm terribly matter-of-fact."

"Well, that's nothing to be ashamed of, if it's true,"

said Duane. "It's refreshing to find a woman who isn't always pretending, or playing a part—if you'll forgive the insult to your sex."

"Insult? It's flattery. I don't think we women have half as much imagination as you men. We may be tricky and underhanded, but that's not imagination, and it's only good for selfish purposes. It's because our life is laid out for us so, that a woman has to do so much double-dealing to succeed. But I'll never succeed that way."

"Then you can succeed by being just your own delightful self."

"But who's going to pay me for being my own delightful self?"

"Pay you?"

"Yes. I've got to earn some money. I've just gone bankrupt as an actress."

"You mustn't be discouraged."

"Oh yes, I must! I couldn't be an actress in a thousand years."

"Of course you could. The test wasn't fair, I tell you. You were thrown into a very difficult rôle and—to take your version of it—it was too much for you at first. That sort of light comedy mixed with simple pathos is twice as hard as Shakespeare or Ibsen or any of those literary fellows."

"Well, I'm glad of it, because if I couldn't succeed in a big way, I want to know it now. If I'd had any ability it would have shown through somewhere. I was simply bad from start to finish. Mr. Batterson told me so himself."

Duane felt the truth of this, but it hurt him to have her feel it. It offended his chivalry to realize how impolite fate could be to so pretty a girl. He hated to see her reduced to the necessity of proving how plucky she could be. He tried to find an escape for her. He said:

"You're far too good for the stage."

"I don't believe that for a minute," she protested. "But I've got to find something I can do."

"What do you intend to try next?" he said, liking her immensely better. Common sense was really very becoming to her.

"I don't know," she said. "I haven't thought."

"What line of work seems to appeal to you?"

"This sort of thing," she laughed. "Eating beautiful food in a beautiful landscape. I'm too tired to-night to care for anything else. To-morrow I'll be more alive."

"May I help you to decide?"

"If you only would! But I'm getting to be a nuisance."

"You are a—a—to me you are a—well, you're not a nuisance."

He dared not tell her what she was, especially as the waiter had set the bill at his elbow and was standing off in an attitude of ill-concealed impatience for the tip, which he knew would be large. Mr. Duane always gave the normal ten per cent. and a bit extra. He tipped wisely but not too well, knowing that an extravagant tip wins a waiter's contempt almost more than none at all.

Daphne was not too tired to note that Duane signed the check or that the dollar bill he laid on the plate came from a fat wallet. The waiter was distinctly articulate in his thanks. He leaped to pull Daphne's chair out from under her and nodded ferociously to another waiter to lay her light wrap over her shoulders. Another waiter extracted Duane's chair from under him. All the waiters fell back and bowed and beamed lovingly. The head waiter fairly cooed "Good night" and almost gave them a blessing. Somehow Daphne was reminded of a bishop watching a bridal couple march away from the altar.

She flushed to remember how she and Clay had left this room. Her feet ached to remember that trudge down the endless Drive. The starter had Mr. Duane's car waiting for him at the curb, and lifted his hat with one hand as he smuggled a quarter away with the other. He

stepped in to lay the linen lap-robe over their knees with reverence, closed the door exquisitely, and murmured, "Good night!"

The car was an aristocrat; it floated from the curb with a swanlike sweep.

Passing Grant's Tomb was not the formidable task it had been on foot. Soon they were in the deeps of the Drive. The trees masked them; low branches flaunted leaves caressingly about them. The moon drifting down behind the opposite hills peered under the branches, glittered on the river, and seemed almost to say, "Is there anything I can do for you, Mr. Duane?"

There was something so exultant, so uplifting about the occasion that Daphne felt an almost cathedral music in the air.

She thought of Clay and herself plodding homeward. She seemed to see them or their wraiths staggering disconsolately along. She felt very sorry for them. Here was a chance to save one of them—both of them, in fact; for in taking her financial burden from Clay's shoulders she would be twice strengthening him. If she were to accept Duane as her husband then her problems would be solved—and Clay would be free of her.

Of course, Mr. Duane had not asked to be her husband. He had not even hinted at a wish to be more than her lover—or not even that—her intimate. But she was sure that she could win a proposal from him if she tried.

To be Mrs. Tom Duane; to step into the society of society; to lift her father and mother from a position of meekness in Cleveland to a post of distinction in New York; to solve at once all the hateful, loathsome, belittling riddles of money; to be the bejeweled and fêted and idolized wife and mistress of this young American grand duke; to buy that impossible trousseau, or better; to live in a New York palace instead of a flat; to go about in her own limousine instead of an occasional taxicab: to be fortune's darling instead of a member of the working-

classes, struggling along with bent neck under a yoke beside a discouraged laboring-man!

These were the things that ambition whispered to her in the murmur of a Satanically convincing breeze.

And yet she shivered. She was afraid of herself and the magic atmosphere and the treachery of luxury.

"You're shivering!" Duane exclaimed. "You're not cold, are you?"

"Yes!" she faltered. It was a lie, but a little white one.

"Won't you take my coat?" he urged, reaching for a light raincoat folded over the robe-rack.

"No, thank you," she said.

In spite of her denial he opened the coat and put it back of her. His right hand touched her right shoulder and lingered there. The shadow was very dense.

His arm enveloped her as lightly as the bat-wing of Lucifer. In a moment it would close upon her and gather her to his breast.

The very zephyr blew her toward him. The moon spread a soft light over his eager face and made it strangely beautiful. Lucifer was said to be the best-looking of the angels.

But the instinct of flight is as native as the instinct of surrender. The questioning glance she shot at Duane turned to one of fear. She leaned forward out of the arc of his arm and murmured, "Please!" meaning "Please don't!"

He understood and sighed, "I beg your pardon!" and, leaving the coat on her shoulders, withdrew his hand and slipped back to his place.

She was afraid that she was sorry because he was not bolder. She could have wept at her own unworthiness in permitting such a thought even to fly through her mind.

She wanted to tear off the coat, but she had not the strength or the excuse for that discourtesy. The coat clung about her. She felt that it was a mantle of shame,

a livery of submission. She kept it on for her own discipline.

She told herself that she was not trustworthy. She was too human, too animal, to be out alone with a man. She would not go near the fire again. She did not belong to herself, but to poor, dear, neglected Clay Wimburn. She would call him to her rescue.

When the car reached her building she was resolved to see Duane no more. She could not tell him so. After all, he had been everything that was courtesy and charity. Even the little caress was not altogether insulting. It would hardly have been polite to treat her with absolute indifference. Duane got down and helped her out and took her to the door, which was locked at this late hour. While they waited for the doorman to answer the bell she was paying him his wages:

"You were wonderfully kind. I had a gorgeous evening. You saved my life."

She had said more than she intended—if not more than he had earned.

"Then may I call soon?"

"Of course."

"To-morrow?"

"If you want to—" This was going too far. She was not escaping him at all. She caught herself: "No, I forgot. To-morrow I'm busy—all day. It's Sunday, you know."

"Monday, then?"

"I—I think I have an engagement Monday evening."

"In the afternoon, too?"

"I—well, I'll let you know."

"Fine! Telephone me at— I'll write it out for you. I'm not often at the club where you found me, and my number isn't in the book." He wrote on his card his telephone address and gave it to her as the doorman appeared.

Daphne thought that it did not look quite right to be seen taking his card, but there was nothing else to do.

He murmured, "Don't forget." She murmured, "I won't." Both said, "Good night." Then the doorman gathered her in, and hoisted her to her lowly eyrie. It was very different from where she would have gone as Mrs. Duane.

She let herself in with a key. She supposed that Mrs. Duane would have a dozen butlers to leap at the door, and would march up a marble staircase between a double line of footmen—or staircase-men—or whatever they called them in that palatial world.

But when she was in her room she tore his card to pieces—after she had looked at it. She stared at her image in the mirror. She hated what she saw there.

She vowed to break her promise to Tom Duane. She vowed to forget his telephone number. But it danced about in the dark long after she had closed her eyes.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE next morning she overslept even beyond the extra hour the Chivvises permitted themselves and the stranger within their gates on Sundays.

When Daphne appeared at breakfast, trying not to yawn, Mrs. Chivvis greeted her with a voice as cold and dry as the toast, and as brittle:

"You were rather late getting in last night—or this morning, rather." Her New England conscience compelled her to this reminder of the inalienable respectability of her house. Also she did not wish her husband to be exposed to the machinations of a girl who could stay out to such hours.

Daphne's answer was not an explanation, but it was better:

"Oh, I know it, Mrs. Chivvis, but I lost my position last night. Yes! I played the principal part and killed it, and now I'm not going on the stage any more."

Mrs. Chivvis was touched. "You poor child! It really is—just too bad!" She pondered, then she brightened: "I'm sorry you're disappointed, but I'm glad you're not to be in the theater. It must be very wicked."

"It's mighty difficult," said Daphne.

Mrs. Chivvis thought a moment more, then she said: "Won't you come to church with us this morning? And to Sabbath-school? I teach a class and so does my husband."

"Do they have Sunday-schools and Bible classes in New York?"

She and her mother had gone to church on the morning

of their first Sunday in Manhattan. Mrs. Kip had perfectly, though pathetically, betrayed the true worship of multitudes of middle-class women when she explained to Daphne:

"I think it would be nice to go to Saint Bartholomew's because they say all the big swells go there. We might see some of them. I guess it's about the most exclusive church in the city."

As a matter of fact it excluded the Kips. Though they arrived in good season, the doorways were already clogged with a throng of sightseers. The ushers restrained them with difficulty from rushing the pews. The sights could hardly be seen for the sightseers. The sights were the regular members. Since they supported the church and rented the pews, their seats were held for them till the service began.

Daphne whispered to her mother, as she indicated the crowd, "The play looks like a real success."

Her mother rebuked her with a glare. But Mrs. Kip had put on her new boots that morning. She had also drawn her corset cables to the last notch. She had not expected to stand up. At her church in Cleveland there was never any lack of space.

When the whisper went through the mob that one of the sights was coming Mrs. Kip's respectful bosom swelled at the historic name; and that hurt her more. But all she saw was a little shred of old lady in black limping down the aisle. That was the super-smart Mrs. van Vanvan meekly hoping to get invited into the still upper classes of Jasper Avenue.

Mrs. Kip gave up. She could not wait even to hear the music or see how the swells worshiped their swell deity. Daphne took her home and her piety expended itself in moans of praise for the bliss of unshipping her stays and extracting her murdered feet from their vicious shoes.

After that Daphne had not gone to church. People do not come to New York to go to church.

The Chivvises, however, were addicted to religion and they had brought a letter from their Congregational place of worship in Roxbury to the church nearest their new home. This proved to be the Broadway Tabernacle, standing in an averted attitude, turning its lofty head away from the noise of the automobile region, as well it might, for services in that wild district resembled the smothered hymns of martyrs kneeling in a Roman arena near the lions' cages.

If Daphne had gone with the Chivvises to church that morning she might have been drawn into that big part of New York existence which attracts least attention—the enormous small-town life within the metropolis.

In a city, as in a sea, the bulk of the populace is in the depths among the quiet regions. The dark, unfathomed caves do not know that they are unfathomed, and they manage somehow with their twilight.

They are not even aware that they are submarine. If some of the fish are solemn and stupid, there are still the sharks and the slimy monsters, the bright little minnows, and the strange electric batteries and living lamps.

These underworldlings hardly know when the storms lash the surface, or what white-plumed billows are prancing about in the gaudy sunlight. They only know of the shipwrecks when shattered hulks float down to the ooze with no hint of what they were.

The Chivvises belonged among the submerged villages and sunken churches of New York. Daphne might have found with them equal adventures, for those Sunday-schools have their wild and unmentionable tragedies as well as the supermarine institutions.

But Daphne did not go. She said she had letters to write.

Mrs. Chivvis sighed at the lost opportunity to redeem her, but she was one of those who believe more in minding their own business than in converting others to their

creeds. She and her husband left Daphne to the Lord's will and went about their Sabbath chores.

They would walk to church as if they heard the summons from a brazen muezzin in a village belfry. But the only bells were the banging gongs of the street-cars. The city crowds were streaming away from town to worship the various heathen gods that set up their shrines in Coney Island and other beaches and amusement-markets.

Mr. Chivvis was in his most pious black, and Mrs. Chivvis was bonneted morally. After they had gone they came back again. Mrs. Chivvis was putting on her decent gray silk gloves as she said:

"Did I tell you?— No, I don't believe I did—you were away—but Mr. Chivvis gets his vacation next week. He's got to take it when his turn comes. The man who was going now couldn't be spared, so we have to leave Tuesday. I'm going, of course, so I can't give you your meals. You can get your breakfasts in the kitchenette. Of course I'll allow off whatever is right. You won't be too lonely, will you, with your brother and sister in the same building?"

"Oh no," Daphne said. "I'll be all right, I guess."

"Well, good morning again," said Mrs. Chivvis, apologizing for squandering two good-mornings when one should have sufficed. Then she went forth again to save her own soul.

Daphne had not realized how much she depended on Mrs. Chivvis till now. She was to be left alone at the very time when she was most in need of society. The whole world was forsaking her.

CHAPTER XXXV

WHEN the Chivvises had gone Daphne assailed the task of composing her letter of resignation from Reben's employ. It was not easy to resign with dignity and the necessary haste.

She reminded herself of one of her early sweethearts in Cleveland, a boy who wooed her stormily when she was a very young girl. He always forgot how late it was till it got late enough for her father to start down-stairs. Then he would say in a loud tone meant for the hallway:

"Well, I guess got go. G' night, M' Skip." He would carry his dignity as swiftly as possible to the front door. Once safely through, he would look back and whisper a more leisurely, "Goo-ood ni-ight, Da-aph-nee-ee!" and close the door with deliberation.

Daphne's present task was much the same. She destroyed almost a quire of her best paper before she decided that the letter which pleased her least was the wisest one to send. It said, merely:

DEAR MR. REBEN,—A change in my plans has compelled me to ask you to release me from my contract as soon as it is convenient for you. I am sure that you can *easily* find some one who will do the work *at least* as well as I did.

With many thanks for your many kindnesses,

Sincerely,

DAPHNE KIP.

She considered it a very business-womanly letter. The only feminine touch she permitted herself was the underlining of the "easily" and the "at least." She trusted that

he would understand that she was sarcastic toward herself.

She sent it off on Monday morning by messenger. It was none too prompt, for Reben had already dictated a very polite request for Daphne's head. When he received her letter he recalled his stenographer and dictated a substitute for his first letter. In this he expressed his regret at learning Daphne's decision to resign; the former understudy had come back from the road, he said, and would resume her work. He begged Daphne to accept the inclosed check for two weeks' salary in lieu of the usual notice, and hoped that she would believe him faithfully hers.

Daphne felt a proud impulse to return the fifty dollars. She wrote a letter to go with it. She looked again, and saw it was the first money she had ever earned. She hated to let it go. She decided to frame it and keep it to point to in after years as the beginning of her great fortune.

But that was for the future to disclose. In the forewhile she followed her struggle to write Reben with a laborious letter to her father and mother. This also was hard writing. But it did not have to be so cautious, and she was not concerned about crossings out and blots and mistakes in spelling. It began:

DARLINGS MAMMA AND DADDY,—Well, I've been and gone and done it! I've played a star part on Broadway and put out the star. I ought to break it to you gently, but I haven't the strength. Just spent two hours writing my resignation. I want to resign before I'm fired—fired isn't the word, though, because if I had been fired I'd have kept my job. N. B. This is a joke. Fact is, I can't act for sour apples. One large audience knows it and now I know it. I was awful, mamma, simply awful!

So I've written the manager that I'm through. I've graduated. I've had stage-fever and got over it. But I won't resign as your loving child and you won't fire me. Don't kill the fatted calf, though, for the prodigal daughter is not coming

home. I may have to live on husks here, but I'm not coming home till I succeed. I don't know what I'm going to succeed at, but I'm going to die trying.

Bayard and Leila are well, and—

Her pen stopped. She really did not know how Bayard and Leila were. In the same building, they were far distant. Suddenly she felt an onset of homesickness. She must see somebody who was her very own.

She went to the telephone and said to the operator, "Switch me on to Mr. Kip's 'phone, please."

Leila's voice answered, "Hello, stranger." She asked why Daphne had neglected them; she said that Bayard was knee-deep in Sunday papers, but was howling for Daphne to come on down.

The mere knowledge that she had a place to go and was welcome there reassured her so that she did not need immediate relief. She said that she was busy and would come in during the afternoon.

She returned to the writing of her letter home. She felt that the news of her failure would discourage her father. To cheer him up, she wrote as if the world were but her oyster, which she with knife would open at her leisure. But she put all the courage she had in her letter.

She had made one try at the oyster. The shell was tough, and the opening small, and her knife had slipped. It had been too dull to open the oyster, but sharp enough to cut her thumb.

While she sat, as it were, ruefully sucking her bleeding thumb and wondering what she was to do next, and where she was to find a better knife, the door-bell rang. The elevator-man gave her a Sunday supplement which Bayard had sent up to her. He had penciled on the margin:

"This may interest you."

It was an article with the epoch-making title, "Women who earn $50,000 a year or more."

Daphne hugged the paper to her heart. This was just what she was looking for. Fifty thousand dollars a year was just what she wanted to earn. Still more would not be unwelcome. She remembered and revised the proverb, "What woman has done, woman can do."

According to the copiously portraited article a man had said that he "knew personally a dozen women in New York who were earning over fifty thousand dollars a year by their own talents and industry, and fifty more who were earning ten thousand dollars a year or over."

The statement had been ridiculed and challenged, but it was, in fact, too mild, as the article proceeded to prove. Several playwrights were mentioned whose successful works were being played by many companies about the country and about the world.

Daphne made a note on a sheet of paper, "Write a play." She would be a playwright. Everybody else was one, and she might as well take a whack at it.

The next category included the actresses. There were many of these, but Daphne did not write "Acting" on her list of oyster-knives.

There was a paragraph about the women in vaudeville, including the intangible Tanguay who did not care how much she earned. But Daphne felt that her chances in the varieties were slimmer than in the legitimate.

Next, of course, was the Golconda of the films. Everybody had read of the little woman whose wistful face had been fought for till the victor signed a contract to pay a hundred thousand dollars a year for the privilege of taking eight pictures of it a second. Silence was golden, indeed, and speech but silver.

And there were other girls and women whose features were better known than the miens of empresses, and some of whom earned more than Presidents of the United States.

Daphne wrote down on her list the word "Movies." She wrote it with hesitance, and crossed it out slowly, and wrote it again, and drew a large ? behind it.

She was afraid that if she could not win an audience with lines she would be still less likely to win them with dumb show.

She meditated a solemn while and then wrote, "See Mr. Duane about this." She decided that she would go to a number of moving-picture shows and imagine herself on the screen, and see if she thought she would like it. She knew that she would like a hundred thousand dollars a year.

Next on the bead-roll of plutocrats came the opera stars and the concert-singers. For centuries women had been able to earn fortunes with their voices, but their voices had reached only to the back walls of the auditoriums and had died with them.

Now their voices could be written in rubber instead of air. They could be circulated like newspapers. The singers of this lucky day could bequeath their voices to the world and posterity, and the royalties to their heirs.

Here was a young woman, a wife and a mother, who sang about in concerts at high prices and sang also into the large end of a megaphone that curiously communicated with all the world. And now she sang everywhere at once, in palaces in Europe, in farm-houses in America, in camps in Alaska, and in geisha-houses of Japan. And the article said that she had earned no less than a hundred and twenty thousand dollars in the last year.

Daphne was so excited that she emitted a few high notes of her own. She decided that the world would willingly let them die. She knew a woman in Cleveland who had spent years and years and thousands of dollars on her voice and she was not ready yet for public work. In fact, she was speaking in a whisper the last time Daphne saw her.

Daphne did not write "Opera" or "Concert" on her list. Nor did she write the violin or the piano. She loved music, but she knew that its manufacture was not for her.

The dancers followed. There were the Russians, of course, and the American women who earned so much. Daphne liked to dance, and many young men liked to dance with her. But as a life-work—she gnawed her pencil awhile, and wrote, faintly, "Dancing" with another question-mark.

The novelists were next. Some of them were so successful that their names were household words and reviewers' bywords. A million copies of this woman's works had been sold. Of that woman's novel, a quarter of a million had been sold before publication.

Daphne sighed. It would be mighty nice to be a novelist, and she imagined that even Clay would not protest at that. But she looked into her waste-basket, where the self-rejected manuscripts of the note to Reben were heaped.

If it took her all that time and trouble to write a letter of resignation, how long would it take her to construct a thrilling narrative and get it published and rake in the harvest?

There were several successful novelists who had not begun to write till their middle age. Mrs. Stowe had not written her serial about Uncle Tom till she was fifty. It had been translated into twenty-three languages, and had had more effect than any novel any man ever wrote.

Daphne was unable to think of any epochal reform to undertake this morning, so she decided that she would put this career aside for the present. By the time she was forty there might be some great evil for her to undo.

The amazing article went on to mention portrait-painters, illustrators, designers of popular statuettes, play-brokers, milliners, dressmakers, interior decorators, candy manufacturers, cigarette manufacturers, conductresses of big schools, hotels, shops, architects, engineeresses—what not? All of them earning big money, some of them much more than the glittering fifty thousand and some less.

Daphne was embarrassed with the riches of opportunity.

And, indeed, what greater revolution has there been in the world's history than the one for which this pretty girl might have posed as an allegory? She sat nibbling a pencil and trying to decide which road she should take toward fame and fifty thousand a year.

She was still in the clouds when the Chivvises came home from church.

CHAPTER XXXVI

DAPHNE finished her list in her own room, and then inclosed the article in a separate envelope to her father. She asked him to return it when he had seen how great a field there lay before her. What more had the 'Forty-niners had to look forward to?

She supposed that there would be obstacles, but she felt that it would do her father's doleful heart good to have a peek at the big sum she was going to earn. If he broke down and Bayard failed, they could lean on her!

Late in the afternoon, when the western sky was turning into a loom for crimson tapestries almost as rich as her own dreams, she grew tired of far-off plans and went to her brother's apartment.

There the New Girl found the Old Woman in the throes of finance. Leila had brought her check-book and her bank-book to her husband. Her affairs were in a knot.

Her check-book had been reduced to a rather toothless condition, but she was sure that she had at least two hundred dollars left to her credit. The hateful bank, however, had sent her an insulting note to the effect that she was overdrawn by thirty-eight cents. She had received this with dignified silence, trusting that the bank would discover its ridiculous blunder and apologize.

She had kept this from Bayard till she had another note from the bank, repeating its complaint and asking what she was going to do about it. She had kept that from Bayard, too, until this afternoon, when he had found her in a hopeless snarl of additions and subtractions.

He laughingly offered to help her. She was hurt by his

laughter, but not half so deeply as he was by his discovery of her monetary condition. He had established her bank account in a mood of adoration, a precious sacrifice on the altar of love. She had not cherished it, but scattered it heedlessly. And money was peculiarly precious now in the final agonies of the hard times, when only the fittest of the fittest could survive the last tests. Credit was the water-cask, and dollars were the hard biscuits of a boat-load of survivors from a wreck. Land might be reached if they held out, but self-denial was vital.

Bayard gazed at Leila with wondering love and terror. She was both divinity and devil in his eyes. He groaned:

"Leila, I don't know whether you are the most beautiful thing on earth or the ugliest. I don't know whether you hate me or love me, and I'm not sure how I feel about you."

"Why, Bayard!" was all she could whisper.

Like most women, she found it almost as exciting to be hated as to be loved; she wanted anything but a tepid emotion. But his glare alarmed her as he raged on:

"Are you trying to wreck me? You know how hard I'm working and how much I need money in my business and how much it means to your future, but you won't stop buying and charging and burning my poor little earnings. We discharged a stenographer yesterday because we wanted to save her salary of fifteen dollars—and here's a check for a pair of shoes for you that cost sixteen."

"I know, honey," she pleaded, "but they were a real bargain. They would have cost me eighteen if I had had them made to order. I was trying to remember what you told me about being economical."

"Oh, my God!" he wailed, putting up his hands as if to ward off madness. He controlled himself and almost wept as he said: "But you didn't have to have 'em at all, did you? Did you? You didn't absolutely have to have 'em?"

"Oh, of course," she answered, her eyes almost irresistibly enlarged. "I can go barefoot if you want me to."

"If I want you to?" he shrieked. "Barefoot! And you've got shoes enough in your closet to fit out a centipede twice!"

"I hadn't a single pair that would go with the new gown I'm having made at Dutilh's."

This was clever of her, because if he attacked her about that he would be drawn away from the shoes and the check-book. He refused the lure. He turned back to the check-book in a sick croak:

"But tell me one thing more before I'm carted off to Bloomingdale in a strait-jacket. Why, in Heaven's name, why—admitting you just had to have that pitiful little pair of shoes—why, when you wrote the check, didn't you subtract it from your balance instead of adding it? I ask you!"

"Oh, did I do that?" she asked, looking over his shoulder. "So I did!" and she put her cheek close to his and giggled.

He shook his head in imbecile infatuation, and drew her around into his arms.

"I don't suppose it's your fault," he said. "But I tell you if I ever have a daughter I'll teach her arithmetic if I have to pound it into her head with a meat-ax. It's more important than morals. You can't make people good by rule, but mathematics is the same yesterday and forever."

That was what Daphne overheard when the maid let her in. She found Leila resting in Bayard's lap. She was earning her money in one of the oldest ways in the world.

Daphne was to see more of the old-fashioned careers that night, for after dinner they went to a music-hall.

Bayard did not tell Daphne what his conference with Leila had been. He simply closed the check-book and the bank-book and said to Leila: "I'll send the bank my

check for thirty-eight cents and ask 'em to close their account. They'll be mighty glad to do it."

"And so will I," said Leila. "It was awfully hard work keeping track of every little penny. I'd much rather have a regular allowance in cash every week."

"All right!" said Bayard. "We'll try that—next week."

Daphne was not told what all this talk was about, but she made a fair guess, though she pretended not to.

She told about her failure and her future and Leila praised her courage and her optimism. They dined cheerfully, and Bayard decided that the best preparation for the hard week ahead of him would be an evening of gaiety. He invited his wife and his sister to go with him to the Winter Garden, where the typical "Sunday Concert" of New York was given.

The law did not permit regular theatrical performances in costume, but irregular performances could be given and "costume" was liberally interpreted, except when a spasm of technicality threw the managers into a panic and the police threatened to take away the licenses.

But the spasms always passed and the theaters returned to their ways. Judging from the crowds that thronged them they satisfied a public desire, and that is what they are for.

Every one of the two thousand seats in the Winter Garden was filled and the promenade was jammed. Bayard had secured three of the last remaining places in a crowded box, with a better view of the audience than of the stage.

Daphne studied the multitude of faces. Most of the men were puffing cigars or cigarettes, and the slashing calcium beams from the light-gallery found in the air drifting veils and tufts and wreaths of smoke.

There was evidently a kind of family feeling in the Winter Garden audiences. It seemed to have its favorites, and it gave them stormy welcome. But it never knew

what it was to get, since the police consider that there is a sacrilege in the distribution of printed programs on Sunday nights. If the announcements are made by a placard set on an easel at the side of the stage that is more sacrosanct.

Daphne and her brother and his wife felt the quiver of expectation that quickened the crowd when the big orchestra struck up an hilarious overture.

The usual things followed: comedy couples indulging in "sidewalk conversations," acrobats, a trained canary that imitated a violin more or less reluctantly, dancers, songsters, more dancers, always dancers, mainly of the ball-room steps, all trying to offer the insatiable public some new quirk for its own later use.

But the distinctive feature of this place was the parade of the huge chorus from the back of the house, along a runway a little above the level of the heads, thence along the orchestra rails to the stage, and back again. Along this path the caravan of flesh came in pompously, bearing spices.

The costume embargo had been forgotten. There was costume, but such a little of it that it could hardly be said to infringe the law. The women, varying from giantesses to the tiny things technically known as "broilers" or "squabs," came in dancing, singing, posturing, ogling. Lights were thrown on them from various angles in a desperate effort to advertise their graces yet more completely or more mystically.

Among all the astonishing forms of entertainment the industry of revealing the human figure is not the least astonishing. Everybody must know the external anatomy of mankind fairly well, and there cannot be much mystery about the general nature of what is concealed. In fact, the more nearly a form approaches the normal, the more valuable it is. Oddities and novelties in human contour are looked upon with pity or indifference and confined to the cheap museums.

Here were fifty women, of various sizes, indeed, but

otherwise of a standardized construction which their bare shoulders and bare legs amply confessed in spite of a little drapery about the trunk. And here were two thousand people staring at them with eyes popping as if they were strange beings from another planet. Some regarded the exposition with apparent excitement, some with ridicule, some with moral horror.

Daphne looked upon the women with mild contempt and the audience with mild disgust. The posturing, winking, and hired gaiety of the women did not nauseate her, because she had seen so much of it. She thought it rather tiresome. It amused her to see that Leila was keeping a jealous watch on Bayard's face, and that Bayard was making a vigorous effort to look bored.

And then Daphne caught sight of Clay Wimburn in the audience. He sat next to a woman of the most suspicious appearance.

Daphne's heart stopped.

Then she set to watching Clay's face with far more anxiety than Leila had shown. It evidently made a difference whose man was looking at these dermatologists.

The whole spectacle became suddenly hideous to Daphne. She was so appalled at seeing Clay there that she felt appalled at being there herself. She began to fear the poor hirelings exhibiting themselves as their own canvases, sandwich-women marching their own wares up and down the highway. The mob of jaded spectators became a company of pagans; the commonplace sacred concert a Babylonian orgy.

She blamed herself for neglecting Clay. He was but human and she had broken his heart. What had he to live for, or be decent for, now that she had thrown him over because of her own ambitions?

She vowed that if she had not already lost him to that harpy at his elbow she would call him back to her at once and keep him far from temptation. If necessary she would marry him out of harm's way.

CHAPTER XXXVII

UNDER the severe test of Daphne's espionage Clay acquitted himself nobly. She was harrowingly interested in his reaction toward such a spectacle and such womankind, for it meant everything to her.

Suddenly her heart leaped for joy. He was yawning. Never before had that homely act seemed graceful to her. Now it was salvation.

Next, she saw that the woman next to him was speaking to the man at her other elbow. Clay was manifestly wedged in among strangers. She wanted to fly across space and kiss him on his saintly brow.

When the intermission came he rose and sidled out into the aisle. She lost sight of him in the general exodus for the promenade and the refreshment-rooms up-stairs. Bayard suggested that Leila and Daphne might like to walk about a bit, but Leila said: "No, thank you! Not among those people!"

After the long interval the crowds poured back and the performance went on. But Clay's seat stayed empty. Daphne missed him, but she was consoled at the thought that he had not remained for what followed.

She did not know that he had seen her when she first came in, and that his conduct, whatever it might have been in ignorance of her presence, was based upon the knowledge that she was there.

His hurt pride and his jealousy of Duane made him stubborn, however, and he would not cast one glance her way. If she wanted him she could send for him.

Throughout the second part of the performance he was

standing among the rail-birds and staring at Daphne with a yearning that overpowered everything except his unwillingness to visit her unbidden. But she did not know this.

What genius lovers have for tormenting themselves and each other; for denying themselves the simplest remedies and for aggravating the fiercest pang!

Daphne went back to her room with her heart as full of wounds as a little red pincushion. She had one resolve in her head—she would recall Clay Wimburn to her side, where she could protect him from the packs of she-wolves that ravened the town at night.

She thought at first that she would praise him for his perfect behavior at the Winter Garden. Then she thought that if she told him she saw him he would wonder why she had not sent Bayard to fetch him. Also, it would probably be unwise to applaud him for merely proper conduct. It might put false ideas into his head. Men had to be managed with care. The least little praise spoiled them. Her mother had often said so.

She decided not to mention the fact at all to Clay when she telephoned to him the next morning. He was like an exile called home when her voice found him at his desk and gladdened his doldrums with its song:

"Clay honey, where have you been all these ages?"

"Working and moping."

"You haven't been to see me."

"Naturally not. You told me that I didn't cheer you up as Tom Duane did, and I've kept away."

"That wasn't very nice of you."

"It was the kindest thing I could do."

"For yourself!"

"I've been unutterably miserable and lonely."

"You didn't look so the last time I saw you."

"The last time you— When was that?"

And now the secret had to be surrendered: "At the Winter Garden."

She could almost hear him blush. He stammered as if fencing. He was really trying to keep from confessing that he saw her there.

"So you were there! And who were you with?" he said. "Duane?"

"Of course not. Bayard and Leila took me."

"Oh!"

"Who took you?"

"I was by myself, and you know it."

"It rather shocked me to see you there alone."

"Oh, you wanted me to be with somebody?"

"I didn't want you to be there at all."

"A fellow has got to do something to keep from going mad."

"So has a girl."

"I supposed Duane had kept you happy."

"No, he hasn't. I don't like him."

There was a pause, a kind of thrilling silence in which he seemed to be finding this bad news exceedingly good. After a time she realized that sometimes one is cut off and left dangling in infinite space. She spoke anxiously:

"Hello! Are you gone?"

"No—I'm here."

"Why don't you say something?"

"What can I say?"

"Say that you'll come to see me some evening."

"But won't I interfere with your engagements at the theater?"

"The engagement is broken."

"What!"

"I was engaged to my art and my art jilted me."

"No!"

"Umm-humm! I'm alone and unemployed in a great city."

"Great! May I call this evening?"

"If you will take me out somewhere." She added, in exuberance, "I'll not forget my purse this time."

"That's pretty rough," he groaned. "I've got money enough, I guess."

"You've had time enough to save up a little with no old extravagant Me to spend it on. Or have you been wasting it on some other girl?"

"Not guilty! I've been a club-man of evenings and ghastly lonely."

This gave her great comfort. He chattered on. "You spoke about going out somewhere. Of course, it's for you to say, but I'd rather just sit around and talk—"

"We can't, I'm sorry to say."

"Why? Will those awful Chivvises be at home?"

"No; it's their absence that is the trouble. They're away for two weeks, and I'm all alone in the basket of sawdust. That's why I can't see you here."

"Where's the harm?"

"The elevator-man would be shocked. He's probably listening on the telephone now. I mustn't receive strange young gentlemen alone."

"But I'm not strange young gentlemen. I'm your fiancé."

"Not now, honey."

"Well, I used to be and I'm going to be. That makes it all right."

She laughed. "That makes it all wrong. You take me to the theater and then it will be all right. Take me to something stupid so that we can talk all the time."

The upshot of it was that Clay called for Daphne and she went down and met him in the hall. He had a taxicab waiting. When they were in it and the door closed and the car scudding he flung his arms about her and she informally forgot that they were not formally engaged. She extricated herself at length from his embrace, and spoke most sensibly:

"You mustn't buy any more taxicabs, Clay. I'm not going to bankrupt you again. After this we'll walk."

He thought that this economical devotion was beautiful.

They went to the Palace music hall; to another the next night. Most of the theaters were closed by the summer weather and they soon exhausted the list of those that were open.

They walked home the first evening under an appropriate moon. The distance seemed hatefully short. Their conversation had run on unchecked, but they were not yet talked out.

"I don't suppose I'd dare ask you to go into the Park," he said.

"Why not?" she demanded. "There's no elevator-man there."

She was quite brazen about it—a woman will go almost anywhere to finish her speech.

So they stepped out of the city into the wilderness. They walked till they found a bench that was not preempted; then they joined the community of Park wooers. Daphne forgot again and again that she and Clay were not engaged.

At length they sauntered home and he turned her over to the elevator-man. It was lonely in the apartment, and she was afraid that a burglar or somebody would wander in by the fire-escape. But she fell asleep and even the morning sun could not waken her when it broke in at her window.

The program of that evening became the program of the week. Clay called for her, took her to dinner, and then to the theater, and then to the Park, and then to her home.

It was a typical New York courtship. They visited restaurants of all degrees. They took their stomachs on a tour of nations—Italian, Hungarian, French, German, Chinese, Syrian; even to an American restaurant.

Sometimes they went to cabarets for dinner or for supper after the theater. Sometimes they danced. They danced in various places amid the assorted souls.

"All the gunmen in town are here," said Clay, looking at the amazing men in one place.

"And all the shoplifters," said Daphne, wondering at the women.

In most of the dancing-halls the strata were completely jumbled. But this was the practice of the multitude, and the whole world seemed to be spending its evenings the same way. The foreign and the American cities were at it; the smaller cities and towns and even the villages were jigging. The mania seemed always to be waning, but never to wane.

At first the character of the crowds disgusted Clay and Daphne. But by and by even Daphne laughed at them. Soon they forgot the quality of the element they danced through. Finally they were infected with it. Clay caught Daphne so close to him that they were like one octopus.

The harangue and insinuation or blatant avowal of the music invaded their souls and bodies. To the music, played by laughing negroes hysterical with epileptic rhythms and savage uproar, their bodies walked as one. They danced till they were hot and flushed and bewildered. Sometimes his lips would brush her cheeks; he would crush her fingers in his, and hers would crush his. They went home in vague unrest.

But always he left her where he met her—in the vestibule of the apartment-house. She would go up, worn out, to a night of sleepless *ennui*, mitigated by lightning flashes of burglar fear.

In the morning she would wake, now early, now late, and loll abed or rise, bathe, dress, cook her own breakfast in the kitchenette, wash the dishes, and either sing or sigh, as the mood was.

She made no progress with her career, for she still wondered what to do. So many careers were open, and she was unready for all of them.

Often she went shopping. There were always little things to buy—sewing-material, if nothing else, for she was falling a prey to the ancient vice of her sex—needlework. It was at least a time-destroyer.

The afternoons she spent in wandering about the bazars, wish-shopping, buying nothing but unrequited longings. Sometimes Leila would invite her to lunch, at home or in some expensive restaurant. Then they would shop. Leila entered each store swearing she would buy nothing, but always bought. Leila and Bayard took excursions to the beaches of nights and over the week-ends, but Daphne would not leave Clay.

Books helped most. Stretched out on the Chivvis divan, she fought the ache of time. She dipped into the Chivvis volumes. Among them she found Hardy's *Tess*, a classic already, though just a little older than she was herself. A few years before she was born it was being denounced as "filthy," forbidden in libraries, and treated as a calamity in literature. Now it was as venerable and unassailable as Homer or Dante.

Daphne knew nothing of its history. She recognized its epic quality. She felt the danger Tess rode into on Alec D'Urberville's horse, but she did not understand the tragedy in the foggy night till she had read far past it.

Then it frightened her. She had read little among the great works, and almost none of those that deal with the grim commonplaces of existence. The things that decent books leave to the imagination her young imagination supplied with little accuracy. She had viewed life, as it were, with half-closed eyes. She did not know how large a part of life the books omit. She did not want to know.

When she realized what Mr. Hardy was driving at—or past—she felt that he was a shocking person. She regarded his book in something of the spirit of the spinstral librarians—with fright as well as disgust. Their fright

is easily explained, but not their disgust for those great processes by which their mothers became their mothers.

Daphne, however, was indignant that Mr. Hardy should have called Tess "a pure woman faithfully presented." Daphne thought her the very opposite, and disapproved so strongly that she did not finish the book—especially after the normal sneaking desire to anticipate the climax had led her to read the last pages. When she saw that it had an unhappy ending she forsook it. She had sorrows enough of her own without reading herself deeper into the blues.

She took up other novels where the love was far more fervidly and picturesquely pictured without ulterior implications.

Late in the afternoon she would begin to dress for Clay. This ceremony took a vast amount of time, but at last she would be ready and she would sit upright and take care not to mar her coiffure. Eventually the telephone would ring. It would be somebody else, as a rule. Once or twice it was Mr. Duane, but she escaped his attentions on the plea of other engagements.

At last it would be Clay that rang. She would go down to meet him. They would set out in search of dinner.

It was a purposeless existence, not even bedouin; it was pariah. All the quaint restaurants were alike. Their quaintness consisted chiefly in the lack of clean linen on the tables and on the guests.

"This is an awful life I'm leading," Daphne complained one evening. "I'm not doing anything worth while. I'm sick of gadding. You and I have all the disadvantages of being married and none of the peace and comfort."

"Lord knows, I'd marry you to-morrow," Clay groaned, "but the office is in such a state I don't know how long my job is going to last. And if I lose this, Lord knows where or when I'll get another, with hundreds of thousands of men out of work."





DAPHNE said, looking at his image, "You're migh
adore you." They kissed each other and watched t



dsome." Clay said, "You're a raving beauty, and I
or's mimicry.



Daphne had an inspiration: "Let me cook for you tomorrow. We'll have a little dinner at my house all by our lonesome, and we'll save money and tips and dyspepsia."

"Fine! Great! Wonderful!" said Clay. "But what about the elevator-man?"

"I'm so desperate that I don't care. Besides, if you come early the day man will leave after he takes you up and the night man won't know you are there till you go."

Clay was jubilant. "And where shall we spend the evening?"

"At home, for Heaven's sake," said Daphne. "Let's be human for once. We can't be very congenial if we can't spend one evening together without going to some theater or movie or dance."

"Nothing would suit me better," said Clay. "Can I bring anything to the picnic?"

"No. I'll do the marketing. You might bring up one or two new records. The Chivvises have a phonograph, but I've played all their records till even Caruso's sobs make me laugh and Harry Lauder's jokes make me weep."

So that was agreed upon and they parted in unusual gaiety.

The next morning Daphne leaped from her bed betimes. She had a mission in life. She was going to cook for her man. She went to market and peered about with the fierce suspicion of a detective.

The only work of fiction she read that afternoon was the cook-book. She set the more deliberate dishes to cooking before she dressed. The kitchenette was a marvel of compactness and ingenuity, but Daphne found everything perverse.

When Clay rang the bell she ran to let him in and ran back at once to her oven. He followed her into the kitchenette and found her divine in her apron and her smudges! He snatched a hasty kiss and carried off one of her smudges.

He insisted on setting the table, though he made more trouble than he saved. He broke one of the Chivvises' plates, and she berated him in housewifely style. She blistered a finger on the oven door and he bound it up in baking-soda with one of his handkerchiefs.

They sat down at last, only to bob up again. He or she had forgotten the salt, the pepper, a knife, a fork. She would rise, he would drive her back to her chair, run for what was missing, be unable to find it. She would follow him and point out that what he was looking for was right before him. Then they would shriek with laughter and return together.

It was a delicious repast, and the burnt taste in the soup and the raw spots in the biscuits only improved them—robbed them of the professional flavor.

"How wonderful it would be if we were only married," Clay burbled. "Let's not wait. I'd love nothing better than to go on like this. I could afford this sort of thing."

"All right," she said. "I can stand your salary if you can stand my cooking."

"The best of it is there won't be much to cook," he said.

"Thanks!" she pouted.

And they whooped with laughter. It was glorious that they were both so witty. That alone was money in the bank. They could save theater money by exchanging jokes.

After the feast she washed the dishes and he helped her. And that, being the first time, was a delightful collaboration.

They were tired when the work was done.

He sat down in a big chair at the window. She brought him a light for his cigar; he dragged her to his lap and she cuddled under his chin. They sat silent for a long time watching the free exhibition of the streets, the scurry of the people, the swarms of cabs, the big and little motors and the street-cars, the liquid fire of the electric signs.

Suddenly a rain-storm made a fierce incursion on the Circle, the pedestrian crowds dispersed, or stood under awnings. Still the cabs went spinning, glistening now with wet; still the street-cars blundered to and fro.

It was pleasant to be indoors and watch the ravages of the weather out there. At length they grew a little weary of the bliss of such contentedness. Daphne was afraid that he would find her a rather tiresome hostess. The persistent flash and fade of the electric sign of a dancing-restaurant up the street put her in mind of the records he had brought. She proposed a dance and he consented with zest.

They set the first of the disks on the machine. It was a new fox-trot. They took the position and stepped out. One or both took the wrong foot. There were collisions of knees, bruises of toes, pauses for dispute, duels of apology. At length they fell into the rhythm. They danced more and more freely, ranging further. The chairs and the tables impeded their orbit and they moved them back, and repeated the tune again and again.

Over the divan hung a mirror that flung them glimpses of their faces as they swept by. These seemed to be strangers peering in. At first Clay and Daphne smiled at those alien witnesses. Then they forgot to smile and wondered at each other's reflections.

Now and then they paused and broke out into laughter, the uproarious laughter we get when our muscles mix us up. They stared into the mirror and laughed at it.

They tired of laughing. She said, looking at his image, "You're mighty handsome."

He said, "You're a raving beauty, and I adore you." They kissed each other and watched the mirror's mimicry. She felt that this was a trifle indelicate.

"Let's try the other record?" she said.

Clay picked up the black disk, set it in place, fixed a new needle, and cranked up the machine. It went spinning like a potter's wheel shaping a strange invisible vase

of melody, shapely as the funeral urn carried on the shoulders of Andromache when she was a slave. They listened a moment, then fell into the step. It took them slowly whirling till they grew dizzy. The faces in the mirror as they flashed past were dreamily melancholy, fervid with young sorrow. The music said all the things that words cannot say. It was the very soul of desire made audible.

Close as they were, they were lonely for each other. Round and round they went, tirelessly round and round in the close air of the little room.

He kissed her hair, she glanced up at him and there was a look in her eyes that was dreadfully tender. He closed her eyes with his lips. Her head fell back and her lips were so close to his that he pressed his lips to them. She turned her face a little, for she was suffocated with fatigue and panting in a kind of anxious terror.

He turned his cheek to hers and kissed her lips again. She seemed to smother and to wish to cry out. But she could not.

She was beyond-believing dear to him. Her body was soft against his with a living, glowing softness that was inconceivably delicate. He squeezed one of her hands in his and her fingers were mere tendrils. He loved her with frenzy. The arm about her lithe waist tightened and clenched till he was afraid that he was cruel; but she made no outcry.

So blindly they drifted that he whirled her against the edge of the table. They lost their poise and slid along the wall. He did not notice that her forehead struck one of the scrolls of the mirror. She would have fallen if he had not held her. He was too dizzy to pause. A chair seemed to wheel toward them. And then he let her sink into it. But her arms would not let him go and her lips pleaded for his.

Somehow it alarmed him a little to see her pleading with him. His eyes turned away for a moment from

that strange look in hers. He caught his own image peering at him from the mirror. He surprised on that face a fearful look before his own amazement effaced it.

It was as if Cain stared at Abel. The face in the glass was animal, fierce, scarlet, sweating.

He recoiled from it in repugnance and hatred. He turned his eyes down to Daphne's upheld face. He saw a crimson mark on her brow:

"You're hurt, you're bleeding!" he said.

"I don't care!" she whimpered.

"Daphne!"

As he had seen Cain looking out from his own face, he saw a stranger gazing from Daphne's. She was not a girl at all any more.

And yet she was a girl, too young to be despoiled. She could not protect herself from him. She was at once his temptation and her own. She belonged to him and he to her. His love blazed in him and made a furnace of his whole frame. But in the very core of the burning, fiery furnace his love walked in white, unscathed as Shadrach!

He lifted her hands with gentle force and kissed them, and, as it were, gave them back to her. Then he dropped heavily into another chair and clenched his knuckles about his temples and an ague of regret and of benediction shook him.

It was a long time before he could look at her and then only when he heard her weeping softly. He put out his hand and took hers and held it.

After a time, on a sudden impulse, he went forward and knelt before her and whispered, "Forgive me!"

She threw her arms about him and whispered: "No! Forgive me!"

They understood the danger they had escaped and they clung together. She set her hot forehead on his shoulder, and her cheek, more than velvet soft, burned against his own.

Even in that holy communion the unreasonable des-

perate flesh renewed its magic. But they fought together for that vague absent imaginary abstraction called Honor against a thousand stinging darts of instinct, against thousands of ancestors, against the implacable demands of nature, and the scorn of consequences. They put aside the sweet persuasions of tenderness, the waiting rapture, the music of the blood, and chose the cold, the bitter, the self-denying.

Clay realized that the only safety was in flight. He rose to his feet with huge effort. Something in his heart told him that he was a fool, and something in her attitude told him that she thought him a brute to spare her. He dared not kiss her good-by.

He muttered, "I love you too much!" and he ran away.

Daphne sat and brooded for a long time, and wondered at the tempest that had swept her and all her anchors out into the sea. She felt remorse and fear for herself. She would have been Tess if her lover had been D'Urberville. She had always read and heard of men who lured women astray. She had fallen into the power of one who protected her.

She was crushed by the knowledge of her kinship with the despised and rejected. But she had learned one of the bitterest lessons of human wisdom—self-distrust.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE next day the Chivvises came back from their vacation unexpectedly early. They had found the hotels expensive and Mr. Chivvis was afraid that his job would be snatched from him if he were not there to hold it down.

Clay called on Daphne that evening and the Chivvises retreated to their own room. But as they could be overheard, it was evident that they could overhear, and the lovers found no chance to say any of the things that freighted their souls.

The next night they resumed their theater-going and their Park-bench communions. But this was only tantalization, and a series of rainy nights drove them back to the Chivvis parlor.

One evening Daphne said to Clay in as low a voice as he could hear: "Mrs. Chivvis is growing uneasy, honey, about our being together every evening. I told her we were engaged, but she didn't seem convinced. Perhaps you would let me wear that beautiful engagement-ring again. I was a fool to give it back to you. May I have it, or—"

Clay blenched in misery. "I—I'm afraid I— You see, I hadn't paid much on it; and last week I had an insulting letter from the jeweler. He threatened to sue me and notify my firm, and I—well, I had to send it back."

He was so downcast that she answered with mock cheer: "Oh, that's all right, honey; it doesn't matter. After all, it's only a ring. And we have each other."

"But we haven't each other. This way of living is

driving me crazy. I'll be all right as soon as these hard times are over and I can make some commissions. But it's so dismal to wait. Couldn't we get married and live on my salary?"

"I could if you could."

He caught her in his arms so violently that she squealed. They stood aghast at the effect of this on the long-eared Chivvises. He caught her again and whispered:

"Aw, what do we care what they think? We'll be married in a few days! You can tell 'em so with my compliments."

Daphne neglected to tell them that night. The next day Clay telephoned to her that his firm had just offered him the choice of accepting half his salary or turning in his resignation. It was really impossible for two to live on half of what was hardly enough for one.

Daphne cried a long while in her room. She got out her list of ways to earn fifty thousand dollars again and cried over that.

CHAPTER XXXIX

IN melodrama the villain uses all his wile to lure the heroine into some secluded spot—aboard a lugger, to the abandoned old mill, or some such place where she is almost as frightened as the audience is, until the hero appears in time to thwart the hellish purpose of the knave, rescue the girl from danger, and bring down the curtain in triumph.

In real life the true danger begins when the curtain falls and the hero and heroine are left together without even a villain for chaperon. Heavenish purposes do not assure heavenly results. Hero and heroine are mutually perilous, and the more they love each other the more grave is their hazard.

And then, too, hero and heroine are getting married later and later in life. In some of our states the average woman used to marry at the age of twenty, but does not marry now till she is twenty-four. That four years is a long, long time to hold impetuous youth in abeyance and keep the hounds of spring on the leash. The prowling time of the male and the coquetting time of the female are more and more prolonged.

Of course marriage itself is one of the most desperate risks of existence, but it lacks the torment and the fraying of suspense. The lovers are permitted to enter the laboratory and put their souls to the test. They live together, grow acquainted with the varied selves of each other; they face the world together and its money and its problems. They live together.

But the poor wretches who are betrothed are subjected to all the anguishes of yearning and kept apart by a

partition of mere etiquette or scruple so frail and so transparent and so easily removed that it rather emphasizes than diminishes temptation.

In other times and climes those who were to wed have been kept from the sight of each other till the ceremony itself. Marriage by parental management has its curses, but they do not include the torment of our civilization, which sends fiancé and fiancée through the trial by ordeal; demands that they walk over hot plowshares with unscorched feet.

But this commonplace is one of the many that nice novelists do not talk about. They leave such dramas to the stories of the olden saints who resisted their devils and were canonized. The saints and sinners of our day have the martyrdoms without the crowns.

Daphne Kip and Clay Wimburn were commonplace. They had loved in haste and honorably, and had rapturously made ready for marriage. She had honorably and wisely and with intelligent love decided that the money poison should be kept out of their life or prepared against as well as possible. She had tried to pay her half of the expenses in the only way a modern wife can really pay her way.

There is much foolish and futile protest against the nowadays woman who goes into business outside her home. But the fact is that it is her business that began it. Her business left the home first and she is merely following it to the places where new conditions and inventions have centralized and mechanized it.

New conditions have taken her distaff and her washtub and her cookery and gossip into the woolen-mills and steam-laundries and restaurants and telephone-exchanges. She has had to go thither to do her necessary work. Even the entertainers, the singers, dancers, tellers of stories, who used to stir the seraglios and the castle halls have been gathered into opera-houses and theaters and into vaudeville and moving-picture palaces.

Daphne, having no gifts for spinning, cooking, or laundry, tried the theater. Her old-fashioned lover protested, and she went, anyway. But she was not suited to the theater, and she retreated with nothing to show for her expedition except her shattered pride and the fifty-dollar check for two weeks' salary.

Daphne began anew to hunt for work; work, the thrice blessing that kills time and makes money and tames passion. But the world seemed to be full of every other trouble except work. Even had she been skilled, as she was not, it would have availed her little, since skilled laborers were being turned off by the thousands. And unskilled laborers were being turned off by the tens of thousands.

Daphne could do nothing but look about and read advertisements and find that none of them fitted her needs or she fitted none of theirs. After a day of frustrated ambitions and wasted energies the evening would bring her lover. He would come up from an office where there had been little to do except discuss the latest failure in business, the most recent slump in railroad or other securities, and the increasing stagnation of trade.

Clay had saved nothing against the rainy season. He had found his salary too small for his courtship requisites; now that his salary was halved his courtship had to be reduced to the minimum of expense.

It was midsummer and hot and the town was morose and torpid of evenings. Clay could not get away to the mountains or the cool shores, and Daphne would not leave town without him. She remembered too well the sirens that stayed in the city. She could not forget the caravan of flesh she had seen at the Winter Garden.

Now and then she and Clay would go to the nearer beaches for a Saturday afternoon or a Sunday, but the very ocean was crowded and the trains to and from were stuffed with tired and sweaty people, with peasant lovers whose antics made romance as repulsive as its fruition

was rendered appalling by quarrelsome husbands, nagging wives, and sticky children. The misery of getting home annulled what pleasure they had taken from ocean waves or forest murmurs.

Bayard and Leila had more money to spend, and they made ambitious voyages. But Daphne and Clay must swelter with the other stay-at-home millions. Clay denied himself even the two weeks' vacation allotted to him. Bayard took his, however, and carried Leila off to Newport, where they boarded humbly, if expensively. Bayard would have preferred to rough it in the Canadian woods and fight muskalonge, but Leila had all her Paris clothes to display, and she argued that it was poor economy to leave them in the trunks since they were already paid for.

Bayard smiled at her quaint finance, but yielded as usual. While they were gone, at their suggestion, Daphne moved down into their apartment. It was large and beautiful and, as Clay said, it was "not infested with Chivvises."

Evening after evening she and Clay sat at the windows and watched the doldrums of the crowdless streets, where a few people dawdled about, mopping their brows or gaping like fish on land.

There was usually a cool breeze at Bayard's lofty windows, and after the hot days it was such a comfort just not to be flailed by the sun that Clay and Daphne felt little restlessness. If that had only been their own nest, and they married, they would have been content—or so they told themselves. They talked of the future to encourage them through the present.

Now and then Clay quarreled with Daphne because of her obstinate determination to have a trade of her own. Then they made up. And quarreled anew—lovers' quarrels, summer storms that break the sultry tension of the air and make peace endurable.

They loved each other ardently and, after the custom of

their nation, accepted their betrothal as a full franchise for blandishments. They were young and well mated and inflammable and they kept close to the fire. Their instincts were aware only that they were marriageable. Their instincts were impatient of too protracted or too informal a courtship. Their long communions were agonizing duels between nerves and intelligence, between the eager moment and the solemn responsibility, the immediate delight and the black aftermath.

There was no one to see them or forbid them; only the habit of propriety, the dread of the community, the rights of the unborn, the dim tacit claims of society.

The remembrance of that evening when they had danced together alone, and Daphne had forgotten all her religions, still filled her with remorse for what she had almost become. Her lover had been just strong enough then to redeem them both from the edge of the abyss. But there came a time when his strength did not suffice. And then it chanced that she was enabled to be less weak than he. Then it was his turn to shudder with remorse, and to bless her for being good. He whispered, abjectly, "I am a beast and you are an angel."

Her wish to be utterly honest with him forced her to confess: "I'm everything but an angel. I'm not good. I didn't want to be good. But all of a sudden I was afraid. That's all; just afraid! I must—I must—I just must be wise, honey. And you've got to help me, for it is so dangerous to be a woman. One moment of too much loving and she may drag some poor little soul into the world to disgrace her and itself forever. That's what I got to thinking of. And I seemed to see my father's face. He was terribly sad. He seemed to shake his head and beg me to be a good girl." She covered her eyes with her hands. "Mamma might forgive me, because she'd understand—being a woman; or she might refuse to forgive me because she understood. I don't know how she would act. Daddy, though, would forgive me, I know,

without understanding. But he would suffer; he would be all bewildered and beaten down. He'd blame himself for not keeping me at home.

"When he came to town that time and I met him at the station and we had breakfast together and I told him I was going to live alone in New York, he was terribly afraid that somebody might insult me—some strange man. He tried to tell me, but he was so bashful he couldn't. I knew what he meant, and it scared him and shocked him even to see that I knew such things. I told him there was no danger, and he seemed to trust me. I mustn't go back on his trust.

"I wish I had a photograph of him. He hasn't had one taken for years and years. It would help me, for I've been in frightful danger. I am in danger now."

"And not from a strange man," Clay groaned, "but from me. I was the one that insulted you."

"No, honey, you didn't insult me, you just loved me too much. You mustn't. I'm not good enough to be loved so much. But I must be good. That's the most important thing on earth for anybody to be, isn't it?—just good."

He said Amen to that and they bowed to the missing commandment which was strangely omitted from the Ten—the great Thou-shalt-not for the young and unwed. It would be perhaps the Fourteenth.

And so they agreed that they must take care of each other's souls. They would be very circumspect and formal.

It is thus that little children sometimes conspire in behalf of righteousness and band together for nobility. Perhaps it is best that youth should be trusted, since those who are ill inclined can manufacture opportunities under the very eyes of jealousy.

Daphne and Clay fought out a battle that must be infinitely frequent in the unpublished chronicles of love. They had seen that only a razor edge severs the pure in-

tention from the foul consequence. They decided to beware of each other, to treat opportunity as a traitor and to thwart it.

The next evening they took the Chivvises to a moving-picture show at the little Circle Theater. And the evening after that each pretended another engagement.

The morning after that Bayard came back, alone.

CHAPTER XL

LEILA had decided that it was better for her health to stay at Newport till the cooler weather came and her summer wardrobe had been worn out.

So Bayard joined the army of town-tied husbands, the summer widowers. He went back once a week on furlough to spend a Newport Sabbath with his wife. He became one of the Friday-night-to-Monday-morning excursionists. There was leisure enough in his office.

He insisted on Daphne's keeping her room in his apartment, and of evenings he affixed himself to her and Clay and made their company a crowd. But they welcomed him as a chaperon of a sort. Also, he paid his way with liberality, except for occasional spasms of retrenchment, when he economized atrociously. He predicted that good times would never come again. The whole world had gone to pot and would never come out.

Suddenly he changed his tune; suddenly the whisper went about that hard times were ending. It had been incessantly shouted that good times were returning or had never left, but the shouters were simply halloing to keep up the courage. Now those in authority began to whisper to one another slyly. The shrewd began to sniff the air and foresmell the soft chinook that melts the snows—and incidentally shovels the avalanches down the mountainsides.

The stock-market ceased to despond. The prices that had fallen, and fallen for no particular reason, bounded up for no particular reason. They fell back, but rose again. They showed an inclination to return from the

depths to the surface. As prices rose, the trading increased. Previously a busy day had always been a day of disaster; now the public began to glance again at Wall Street. Investors were beginning to visit the market. Brokers who had boasted of the pettiness of their trade began to boast of its improvement. Their commissions were still picayune; thousands of clerks were still out of employment, and the rest were kept on as a "charity," but the Street had endured so long a drought that a cloud the size of a man's hand was accepted as proof of a deluge of fat rain.

Bayard was no longer a silent and morose companion of Daphne and Clay. He began to talk big talk:

"I tell you, the market has struck bottom. Prices have got no place to go but up. I don't believe in speculating, but—well, after all, Wall Street is the barometer of the nation. You can't stop the storm by throwing away the barometer. But you can foretell it by watching. The man who buys now and holds on is going to come out rich. It's a time to pyramid. If I weren't absolutely opposed to speculation I'd go down to the Street and buy everything I could lay my hands on and watch it soar."

A little later he had forgotten that he was opposed to speculation. He quoted prices as if they were epigrams. Railroad and industrial shares assumed a personality. They were like heroes battling for life. When he saw the advance of some stock that he had wished to buy but had not bought, he felt as if he had suffered a personal loss. When a stock that he favored went down he forgot to credit it as money saved.

In his bachelor days, when Bayard was growing in commercial stature like a young giant, he had regarded his business with all the warmth of a poet. His office-building was his Acropolis and his office the peculiar temple of his muse; and her name was Profit. He thrilled like a poet to the epic inspiration of a big sale, and he knew a joy akin to the poet's precise revision of his

scansion if he devised a scheme for reducing overhead charge or wastage.

When he had first entered the office each of the heads of departments had a stenographer of his own. These ladies worked hard when they had to; but Bayard saw that there were many hours when they had nothing to do but polish their nails, read submerged fiction, meditate the landscape, or chew the aromatic cud.

He had been inspired to suggest a grouping of these typists into a battalion. The official who had dictation to give pressed a button and the first idle stenographer in the line responded with note-book ready. By this means Bayard revealed to his delighted chief a method of reducing the "harem" by twenty-five per cent. and of keeping those who remained so busy that they were never *ennuyées*. On other occasions he pointed out how to save money on lead-pencils, on postage-stamps, on carbon paper, on envelope-addressing, and on lost motions.

In his leisure hours at his club, over the pool-table or when otherwise occupied, he was thinking of schemes or carrying out schemes to increase the business or diminish the expense.

It was thus that he had made himself important enough to advance rapidly in his firm. And he had put a large share of his salary every week into a savings-bank. With his extra commissions and bits of unexpected luck he had bought securities of impregnable value. These he had locked away in a safe-deposit vault. They paid him only four or five per cent., but they were as sure as anything mundane. And twice a year they granted him the lofty emotion of the coupon-cutter.

He had paid cash for what merchandise he bought and demanded special discounts for it. In time the many littles made a mickle. He had five thousand dollars' worth of bonds in his safe-deposit box.

And then he married—pawned himself at the marriage-shop. He kept his hoard a secret from Leila. He had

planned to add to it regularly and surprise her some day with his wealth. But somehow, after his marriage, he never went marketing again for securities; he had no cash to pay; he caught the plague of charging things. He quarreled with Leila bitterly and belabored her with axioms of thrift, and then showed how completely he had forgiven her by outdoing her in her own vices.

Once or twice he even went to the vault and took forth the long, slim, flat bonds, and planned to put them up as security for loans, to pay bills with. But he shook his head over them, laid them back to rest, and let his creditors walk the floor. His hoard was intact, but his debts were increasing.

Now he saw a chance to use the talents that he had buried in a napkin. He was glad that Leila was in Newport. She was costly at a distance, but she left him free to give his mind to his work. One loving letter a day and an occasional telegram absolved him of his duty. The rest of the time belonged to finance.

He filled the ears of Clay and Daphne with his market jargon. He was as unintelligible to Daphne as a mad Scot talking golfese.

"Look at Q. & O.," he would say; "sold at eighty-five a year ago. Friend of mine bought it. People who were in the know said it was going up. It ought to have gone up, but it didn't. Dropped slowly and sickeningly to forty-three. To-day it is forty-six. If I had gone into the market the other day with five thousand dollars and snapped it up at forty-three I'd have cleaned up three hundred and a half in no time. If I bought now at forty-six I'd get one hundred and eight shares for my five thousand. If I held on till the price got back to eighty-five, as it's bound to, I'd have over nine thousand dollars, nearly a hundred per cent., and it would probably go on up perhaps to two hundred. That's bad, eh?"

"First catch your five thousand dollars," said Clay.

"I've caught it," said Bayard. "I've had it all along."

"You have?" Clay groaned. "If I'd known that I'd have borrowed it to get married on."

"Oh, would you?" Bayard grinned. "To get married on? Not much!" It was well that Leila did not see that cynic grin. "And what collateral would you have offered me?"

"Daphne," said Clay. "She's a collateral relation of yours."

"That's why he wouldn't accept me as security," said Daphne.

They all laughed furiously at the brilliant tennis of their repartee. It is very cheering to be cracking jokes about dollars. Almost anything is a good joke in their presence, and almost nothing in their absence.

"Joking aside," said Clay. (He was a well-meaning young man, but he was one of those who say, "Joking aside.") "Will you lend me enough for Daphne and me to get married on?"

"Not in a million years," said Bayard. "When I've made a killing with this money I'll make you all a present, but you couldn't pry this out of me with a crowbar. I wish I knew where to borrow more. If you can raise any money, Clay, don't you spend it in matrimony. A fellow can get married any time, but it's only once in ten years that you can climb aboard a market after a panic and ride in with the tide."

Clay and Daphne thought that Bayard was a Shylock, and told him so, but they could not wheedle his money from him for all their pounds of flesh.

He went to his safe-deposit vault, took out his bonds, carried them to the vice-president of his bank, and borrowed all that he could raise on the securities. The bonds had fallen below par on account of the depression, but Bayard was granted eighty per cent. of their face value, minus thirty days' discount at five per cent.

His anæmic bank account was suddenly swollen by three thousand nine hundred and seventy-nine dollars and eighteen cents.

He sought out a broker, a college friend whom he could trust, to advise him honestly. They conferred on the stocks to buy. The old dilemma could not be escaped: those that offered the most profit offered the most risk. To buy on margins was further danger with promise of further profit.

Yet, after all, Bayard felt, to buy outright, however wise, was tame. Even if he doubled his money he would have only eight thousand in place of his four. And eight thousand was no fortune.

If he put up his entire funds as a ten-point margin a swift rise in stocks would multiply his money indefinitely. The Napoleons were the men who knew when to strike, and struck hard. Bayard did not chance to reflect that Napoleon went from Elba to Waterloo after a brief vacation. He did not remember what an unlucky word Napoleon is in Wall Street. He resolved to be another of these young Napoleons.

The question of what stocks to bet on was a thrilling one, requiring a long war council, but at length the disposition was made and he gave his broker the command to go forward.

The dealings on the Exchange were so small that even Bayard's money made an audible clink as it struck the ledge. In those dull days when the brokers earned a precarious existence by taking in one another's stock-washing Bayard's appearance advertised that there was a hint of life in certain quarters. The traders might as well boost those stocks as any others. Bayard's stocks began to sell, to creep up an eighth, a quarter. One of them rose two points, fell back one, and rallied by the close to a gain of $1\frac{3}{8}$. Another reversed the process.

Bayard, reading his Wall Street edition, turned to the final quotations with trembling anxiety. The vision of that "$+1\frac{3}{8}$" opposite one of his stocks sent him so high in the clouds that he could hardly see the "$-1\frac{3}{8}$" opposite another.

He had been caught by the most thrilling of serial stories, published daily and written by a host of unconscious collaborators.

He strutted when he met Daphne and Clay that evening and insisted on dining, wining, and theatring them. He was so proud of himself that he telegraphed Leila a bouquet of flowers.

Business at the factory was slumping to a collapse, but Bayard felt that its future was certain: he said that Wall Street was always six months ahead of the times. Six months later business would begin to boom. He would let his office work slumber and devote himself to the Street.

The market crept up and up. Bayard turned his profits back into his speculation. He was growing rich. He was planning works of lavish charity, works of art, the purchase of a great reserve fund of securities.

Clay once more offered to relieve him of enough of his wealth to marry Daphne on. But Bayard said:

"Nope! I'm sorry to seem such a tightwad, but 'Business First' is my motto. As soon as I clean up a bit of real money I'm going to put mother in a position of independence, so that she will never have to ask poor old dad for anything again. That will save them both a lot of suffering and cut down the output of hard words. Then I'm going to make dad a big cash present. I've got to do those things before I get round to Daphne and you. If I hit it big I'll stake you to the handsomest wedding Saint Thomas's ever saw."

But Daphne and Clay did not want a handsome wedding. They wanted a wedding.

Some years before, when President Taft was inaugurated, every omen was fine. The Weather Bureau promised fair weather. There was not a hint of storm anywhere upon the continent. And then a blizzard "backed in" from the ocean, and played havoc with the throngs.

So upon the era of good feeling and democratic equality and civilized peace the European war backed in from nowhere. Nobody expected it; hardly anybody believed it, in spite of the multitudinous tragedies it brought down in torrents.

A young man from Serbia shot a grand duke in Austria, and the world heard of Sarajevo for the first time, but not the last. The bullet that slew the Austrian heir multiplied itself as by magic into billions of missiles. A young shoemaker from Bavaria, to his great surprise, killed an old Belgian school-teacher he had never heard of. The school-teacher fell into a ditch still clasping his umbrella. The shoemaker moved on with a strange appetite for shooting.

Refugees in hordes filled the roads with a new Pharaonic exodus. So many children plodded along in hungry flight that Herod might have been hunting down the innocents again.

The peaceful Belgian army, suddenly leaping to defend its borders, was shattered, and the fragments driven with their king into another nation. Steel-capped fortresses were knocked to flinders. Churches and cathedrals were splintered with unheard-of artillery. Convents were turned into regimental harems. American girls at school in Belgium, as well as native nuns, were made mothers of children whose fathers they could not name. Whosever the blame, the world devoted itself to waging or watching the most vicious, most inexcusable, most destructive war in human record.

With the moral cataclysm went a financial earthquake. The European exchanges flung their doors shut. The American exchanges tried to keep their shop windows open, but had to close them down.

Bayard Kip was among the first casualties. Before he could put in a stop-order his margins were gone. He had said that prices, having struck bottom, could go no lower. Now the bottom itself was knocked out.

Prices stopped falling at last because of the closing of the markets. Europe established a general moratorium. America established one of sentiment. Everybody owed somebody else, and everybody gave tolerance because everybody needed it.

Night fell on the commercial world, a night illumined by horrors unknown before. Europe was one Pompeii. Agonies grew so numerous and so enormous that people ceased almost to feel them. Individuals still complained of toothache and of bad cooking, of rain and of heat and of small tips. Yet there was unparalleled charity while America floundered in a quicksand of financial death.

Bayard's factory could not meet even its diminished pay-roll. The president of the concern could not borrow a penny at the bank of which he was a director. The factory shut down, sending all its workmen into the hordes of the unemployed. The office forces were reduced to a minimum and the salaries of the minimum further reduced. Clay was thrown out of even his half-job and Bayard was put on half-pay.

Bayard was dazed at the mockery of his wisdom, the sudden ruin of his slow-built fortune. The war was one of the accidents that make vanity of all theories and dignities and prides. In the big gambling-house of the universe the plans of the wisest were hardly more certain than "systems" built up to break the bank at Monte Carlo.

The one thing that lightened Bayard's shame and terror was the fact that all the world was aghast and afraid. Greater fortunes and minds than his had gone agley.

Bayard's sober thoughts concerned themselves with extricating himself from the wreckage. It was not possible to debarrass himself of everything. He could not give up his expensive apartment. It was leased for a year and a half more. He could not dismiss his expensive wife; she was leased for ninety-nine years. He could not

give up his character, his costly tastes, his zeal for front, the maintenance of a good façade.

The instinct of lovable bluff was seen in his telegram to Leila. He wanted her at home to comfort him, now that he had no business for her to hamper. Besides, he could not afford to keep her at Newport. Out of his ominously small funds he telegraphed her a liberal sum to pay her bills and her railroad fare and parlor-car fare. She telegraphed in answer that her trunks had all been packed when she got his message and she would be on the first train. He met her and found her astonishingly beautiful in her millionaire uniform.

He felt like the pauper who received a white elephant for a present. But she was gorgeous in her trappings. They embraced with mutual approval. He laughed:

"I was going to begin economy by cutting out the taxi business, but I couldn't carry a Cleopatra like you in the subway. You look like all the money in the world. And you're worth it." In the taxicab he crushed her to him again in a dismal ecstasy and sighed, gaily: "You're too grand for me, honey. I'm busted higher than a kite. You didn't bring home any change, of course."

"I did better than that," she beamed, and, being married to him, made no bones about bending and disclosing one entire silk stocking most elegantly repleted. It was transparent, translucent, indeed, like gossamer over marble, and of a sapling symmetry except for one unsightly knob which she deftly removed and placed in the hand of Bayard.

He did not need to glance at his palm to tell that it was full of bank-notes.

"What's all this?" he said.

And she, prim and proper again, chortled. "That's the money you telegraphed me to pay my bills with."

"But—"

"This is no time to pay bills."

"You're a genius," he said.

And she was, in her way.

When they were at home again he told her of his ruinous speculations. She did not reproach him. She was gambler enough to thrill at the high chance, and sportswoman enough not to blame him for losing his stakes.

"Don't you worry!" she said, from his lap, as from a dais. "We'll be rich yet. You mustn't imagine anything else. There's everything in thinking a thing is going to happen. I'm too sensitive to be a Christian Scientist about pain, but I am one about good luck. You must just tell yourself that you're going to come out all right, and you will.

"And we must keep up appearances so that other people will believe in us. It's the only way, too, to keep your credit good. I learned that at Newport. People who are people up there never pay their bills. That's why they get trusted everywhere, and have plenty of cash. Their creditors don't dare insult 'em or sue 'em. The only people who get sued are the poor little dubs that pay cash most of the time and then ask to be trusted when they're hard up.

"This old war will blow over in a little while and you'll be on the crest of the wave if you'll only stay there. That's where we must keep, honey, right on the crest of the wave. The crest will carry you along on itself, but once you get caught in the undertow you're gone. I'm right! I know I am! Don't you see? Say you do, anyway, or I'll bite your beautiful head off."

He said she was, and retained his beautiful head. And there was a worldly truth and a Satanic wisdom in her creed. In that subversion of all standards the cautious soul was in as much danger as the reckless. The ship of civilization was like the torpedoed *Lusitania*, crashing through the sea on the momentum of its disabled engines, with its decks atilt and awash, its life-boats smashed or out of reach, and panic everywhere. The selfish and the

ruthless stood a better chance than the altruists and the schemers.

This was the hour of triumph for the Leilan school, but it was enough to turn an orthodox financier into an atheist toward the great god Mammon.

Bayard had rebuked Leila for spending money on clothes and on amusements. But she had had the fun; she still had the clothes; and where were the fruits of his years of self-denial? Where were his hoarded earnings? His few bonds were irredeemably in pawn. And on the roads of Belgium and East Prussia myriads of wretches who had kept thrift and builded them houses were staggering along in hungry penury, fugitive from shattered homes and wondering after the next day's bread.

CHAPTER XLI

BAYARD tried Leila's recipe for a time, but there were expenses that he could not charge, and even the wad of money she had smuggled out of Newport did not last long. Other people were no more willing to pay bills than he. Moneys that were owed to him he could not collect. He could not respond to the multitudinous appeals for charity. This was a real shame in times of such frantic needs. He could not do any of the honorable, pleasant things that one can do with money. He had to do many of the dishonorable, loathsome things one without money must do.

He pocketed his pride and appealed to wealthy friends for loans, but usually all that he pocketed was his pride. The time came when even the universal patience began to give out. Far-sighted people who had invested their funds were left stranded when dividends were passed. Those who had cash to spare were afraid of their to-morrows. Asking a man for a loan was like asking a man in a theater fire to step back and let you pass.

In his desperation Bayard's thoughts reverted to his original rescuer, his father. He had never appealed to the old man in vain. Bayard had often promised himself the delight of sending home a big check as a subtraction from his venerable debt. But it was a promise easy to defer, in the face of all the other temptations and opportunities. His father never pressed him, never expected a return of the money he had been investing in the boy. For a child is a piece of furniture bought on the instalment plan to go into somebody's else house as soon as it is paid for.



"MY rings!" Leila cried. "Don't you see! My dia
some chains and brooches. They're worth a lo



onds and rubies! And I've got a necklace or two, and
money. And you're welcome to 'em, daddy."

Bayard put off the appeal to his father as long as he dared, but at last sat down to the hateful letter.

He began with wise remarks on the war and its undoubted brevity, since the expenses were such that no nation could or would meet them long. He spoke of the temporary closing of his factory, but emphasized its splendid prospects when the war should be over. He admitted that he had been extravagant and luxurious beyond his means, but he said that he had learned his lesson and would never again put his whole resources in jeopardy.

As he wrote the words "Never Again" he frowned to think what a byword they had become. The very music-halls and the cartoonists had educated people to realize that he who says "Never Again" will soon say it again.

He hated to trouble his poor old dad at such a time (he wrote with truth), but his very life depended on raising some immediate money. He was young and husky and he would be on his feet in a jiffy. He would pay back every cent in a short while, even if he had to borrow it of some one else. Anyway, in a few weeks the panicky conditions would be over and business would return to the normal. He knew, he wrote, that "Old Reliable Kip" could perform his usual miracle and get blood from some of those Cleveland turnips.

He was so sure of his father that he ended his letter with an advance payment of thanks. This was the first payment he had made in advance for a long time.

He liked his argument so well and was so cheered by its logic that he gave the letter to Daphne to read. She was less impressed by the letter than by her vision of the addressee. Her eyes filled with tears at thought of him. She saw him better through tears.

"Dear old dad, he never failed us yet," she mumbled. "He never will. Thank Heaven I didn't buy my trousseau. He can give you that money."

She was tasting for almost the first time the delicious

sensation of enjoying money that had not been spent. She thought of another stimulant for her father.

"You'd better add a postscript saying that my prospects for a job are fine."

"At what?" Bayard grunted.

"I don't know yet. There were several I could have had, but I was very choose-y because it wasn't absolutely necessary for me to take them. Thank Heaven it hasn't been a matter of starve or—sin, as it is with so many poor women."

Bayard threw her a glance of amazement. It was strange language from her to him. The thought had never entered his mind that his sister could debate such a problem.

Suddenly he had a vision of the entire possibility of the alternative. Thousands of other sisters had been forced to the decision. If he and his father and Clay failed Daphne, what recourse had she, seeing that she had been raised to no trade?

Bayard had another hideous vision of the possible: what if he failed Leila and her father went to smash, as he was always about to do?—what would become of her, with her luxurious necessities and her reckless beauty?

Money! He must get money. A lot of it at once; enough to live on, and a big reserve. He swore to himself that he would never again risk his savings. And once more that "Never Again!" mocked him like a ribald echo. His father must come to his aid. Must was so urgent that it became "Would."

He sealed the letter, put a special-delivery stamp on it, and took it to the branch post-office so that it would reach Cleveland without fail the next morning.

When he got back to the house there was a telegram from home.

Leaving beaver due tomorrow A.M. don't meet me but be home must see you important mamma well love

FATHER.

Leila had already opened the telegram and called Daphne down from her room in the Chivvis apartment. Daphne read it and said:

"Eighteen words! He must be simply distracted about something!"

CHAPTER XLII

THE next morning Bayard rose betimes to meet his father at the train. And Daphne went to the Grand Central station with him. She remembered the previous occasion, when in her restless ambition to conquer New York she had met him there with glib promises. She had insisted on paying his way. She had been a trifle ashamed of his shabby togs and his efforts to grind his tips exceeding small.

Now she was there without a success to her name. Her best hope was that he had squeezed his pennies so tight that enough of them remained to save Bayard from poverty and herself from a humbled return home.

Just one thing quickened her with pride. He had been worried about her soul and she had smiled at his needless alarms. Now she knew that his alarm had not been needless. Her soul had been tried, tortured on a rack of inquisitional temptations. She had escaped, not without risk, not altogether of her own volition, not without regrets; but she had escaped.

She had the right to wear the simple glorious laurels of a good girl. It made her glad beyond words. She had not squandered her money; she had not squandered her integrity. She could meet her father's eye with pride of victory, if not of ignorance. That was worth all the harrowing self-denials.

She ran to her father and flung her arms about him, and Bayard hugged him and carried his suit-case for him. It was no time to be tipping a porter. Nor to be making use of taxicabs with the jitney subway at hand. Bayard

lugged his father's suit-case along Fifty-ninth Street. The hall boy, who had not been tipped for some days, observed a strict neutrality. He was feeling the pinch, too.

Somehow these economies of Bayard's did not seem to reassure Wesley as they might once have done. But Bayard and Daphne had agreed not to talk trouble till after breakfast. Leila was a radiant hostess, and they all made as much of a hero of the old veteran as they could with such mental reservations of anxiety restraining them.

When the breakfast was ended Wesley noted that Leila herself carried the dishes away, with Daphne's help. When the table was clear she closed the door on the two men and said:

"We'll leave you two alone to talk business."

The two men regarded each other askance, as uneasily as two wrestlers circling for a hold. Wesley was the first to speak. He said:

"Well, my boy?"

"I wrote you a long letter last night, dad," Bayard said.

"You did? What about?"

Bayard had guessed the situation; he saw the cruel joke of it. He thought he could dull the edge with mockery. He snickered, rather cravenly:

"I wrote to ask you to lend me some money. I guess I wasted the postage."

"And I guess I wasted the fare over here. I thought I oughtn't have taken a berth in the sleeper, but your mother insisted—said I'd not been feelin' any too well."

Bayard laughed outright—a laugh wet with vinegar tears.

Wesley sank into a chair with the little whimper of a sick old man—such a sound as that Belgian schoolmaster with the umbrella must have made when the bullet knocked him over into the ditch. That bullet and the countless others and the shrapnel were reaching across the ocean into American towns.

Bayard went to his father and put his arm about him and regretted his Wall Street disaster with a ferocious remorse. He could not speak, and there was a long dumbness before Wesley sighed:

"I guess we got to lose the home, then."

That "then" was a history in a word.

Bayard bent his head in shame at his helplessness. As usual, it was Wesley who found a shabby comfort in the situation—found it for his son.

"Don't you think anything more about it, my boy. I'm kind of relieved." He giggled with a pitiful senility. "I been so ashamed at traipsin' over here to bother you instead of rushin' over to help you like I ought to—being your father—that I'm kind of glad you can't help me. I got no right to add to your troubles. I'm supposed to take care of you."

This cracked Bayard's pride completely. A sob broke from him, and others followed in ugly, awkward succession. Men do not know how to cry.

Leila heard from the hall, and the uncouth sound frightened her. She ran to the door and found Bayard on the floor with his arms across his father's knees. He was crying like the baby his failures had made him.

Leila felt hot tears suddenly drenching her cheeks, and Daphne, peering past her, stared through the eyes of anguish at her brother's grief. But what clutched the hearts of the two women was the old shriveled hand of Wesley wavering above the head of his son.

The women marveled over the men till they saw that Bayard was regaining his self-control. Then they retreated unseen to spare him the final degradation of knowing that they were witnesses. Leila closed the door softly, and she and Daphne clung together, listening without compunction.

They heard the miserable business that follows such a break-down, when the soul that has wept must pick up

the scattered shreds of self-respect. Bayard choked, and sniveled, and laughed, and blew his nose, and called himself a damned good-for-nothing cry-baby.

Wesley told him he was no such thing. He was a fine boy and he'd own New York yet; he'd worked hard, and he was young, and if he was in trouble it was only what packs of millionaires were in. He must not worry. Everything would come out all right. And if the home had to go, after all, it wouldn't matter, because it was only an old ramshackle thing and lots too big for two old folks with no children round the place to fill up the empty rooms. It was a lot of bother for mother, and she'd be a heap comfortabler in a smaller place—one of those nice cozy flats they were building so fast in Cleveland.

Bayard would not be solaced by any such abnegation. He kept groaning:

"To lose your home! To think of you losing your home! And me standing by!"

"Why, it's nothing, Bayard. After all, we're not in Belgium. We've got friends. And relations. There's no danger of anything happening to us. I had no right to come over here and worry you about an old house that's no good, anyway!"

Daphne clung to Leila and buried her face in Leila's bosom to smother her frenzied grief. Leila, mopping Daphne's cheek with her own handkerchief, caught the glint of a diamond on her finger. It glistened like a great, immortal tear.

It inspired her with a new hope. She had often consoled herself with the thought of her jewels as a final refuge, but she had put off the evil day. Now she felt that the time had come. She threw open the door and spoke into the gloom with a voice of seraphic beauty:

"I couldn't help hearing what you were saying. You needn't be down-hearted, though, for I've just thought of a way to help daddy out." He was "daddy" to her also.

Bayard and Wesley turned and stared at her in amazement. She went on in a kind of ecstasy.

"My rings!" she cried. "Don't you see! My diamonds and rubies! And I've got a necklace or two, and some chains and brooches. They're worth a lot of money. And you're welcome to 'em, daddy."

The men were confused with too many emotions to know what to feel, much less what to say. Leila's mission was so divinely meant that it was sacrilege to receive it with reluctance. And yet for Wesley to let this new daughter-in-law pawn her trinkets for him was post-graduate humiliation.

Bayard was proud of Leila for her final extravagance, but the sarcasm of things could not escape him. She, the untamable spendthrift, the model of financial misbehavior, was chosen to play the rôle of saving angel for the dashing young Napoleon and the cautious old Fabius.

But needs must when the devil drives, and they obeyed Leila's orders. She was for visiting a pawnshop at once, but Bayard balked at letting her go. She laughed at his scruples; some of the best people were regular clients of the pawnshops, she said. That was what jewels were for when they were not being worn; and she was not likely to be going anywhere where her full regalia would be appropriate.

The end of it was that Bayard demanded the melancholy privilege of visiting the pawnshop himself. Leila made a heap of her adornments. Last of all she took from her neck the little plaque he had given her with its star-dust of diamonds frosting a platinum filigree.

"You'd better take this, too," she said. "We shall need such a lot of money. You ought to get a good deal for this, it's so exquisite."

And now he blushed because it had not cost him so much as she thought! He had bought it to appease her after their first big quarrel, when she had terrified him by running up bills. He had rebuked her with a jewel.

He had run up a bill to get the jewel—the first of his sins of the sort. And now he was ashamed because he had not sinned with more generosity.

He refused to take the plaque. It was bad enough to take the other treasures from her. He felt like an invader robbing a helpless woman.

"I couldn't feel any lower, honey," he said, "if I were tearing these earrings out of your ears."

"Well, if I were a Belgian lady and you were looting my home, you'd kiss me at least," she laughed.

But he would not smile. He kissed her mournfully and hurried away to the pawnshop. He skulked in and out like a burglar, and he brought away a pack of tickets and a lump of money. The pawnbroker apologized for lending him less than half the value of the gems; so many people were looking to the pawnbrokers for salvation, he said, that he could not find cash enough for all. Times were hard indeed when the pawnshops were overworked.

Bayard went home and surrendered to Leila her funds. She passed them over to her father-in-law. Poor Wesley tried again to evade the donation.

"I don't see why you should do this for me," he complained.

And Leila said: "I'll tell you why, daddy. The first time you saw me you took me in your arms and loved me, and said you were proud of me, and you said, 'Isn't she pretty?' That made an awful hit with me, and I've just been waiting for a chance to get even. If you don't take what you need, I'll jump out of the window."

He saved her life. He peeled off the minimum that would serve as a sop to his creditors and said he would take the afternoon train home.

CHAPTER XLIII

DAPHNE, having been a mere spectator, had resented her uselessness. Her brother had wept and groveled because he could not help his father; but nobody expected a daughter to be a reliance at such a time.

In a panic women were something to save; precious baggage; prize cattle; stupid, panicky things; more trouble than help, like horses in a fire.

Women and children first—that was the ideal of the male hero. Women and children could not vote because they could not take care of themselves, or fight, or pay their own way, put out fires or put down riots, strangle mad dogs, tie up drunkards or maniacs, or furnish important money of their own earning in a time of disaster.

This was man's opinion of woman and Daphne knew that numberless women held the same opinion of themselves, or acted on it at least.

There were women who were as brave and as resourceful and as calm as any man, but they did not seem to count somehow. The triumphant women that won approval were the Leilas, the sirens whose strength was their frailty, whose fascination their greed.

Daphne had watched Leila's little scene with as much confusion as the other two Kips. She felt a normal amount of jealousy, of course, as woman to woman, but no more than a healthy amount, for she liked Leila and she was grateful to Leila for being able to rescue her father and for being willing to. It was a fine thing for Leila to strip herself of her last splendor to help an old father-in-law pay the interest on a mortgage on a house in

another town. Daphne gave Leila full meed of applause for that.

What embittered Daphne was that it had to be Leila and not herself that saved her father, and that Leila had to do the deed by spending things she had not paid for herself—ornaments, gewgaws, gifts.

The money Daphne had saved by giving up her trousseau had done no visible good to anybody. The sacrifices she had made had put no money in her bank. Her willingness to toil had not brought her profit or comfort—not even more toil. She had earned nothing. But Leila had earned everything—"if you could call it earning," Daphne pondered, darkly, "to get things the way she got those!"

Leila had collected from life perhaps three thousand dollars' worth of jewels and Daphne had collected a fifty-dollar check, framed—and that check was in lieu of work. As soon as she remembered that check she ran up to her room and took it down from the wall, ripped off the back of the frame and removed the check from the mat.

She studied it and thought, "The first money and the last." Then a vigor of determination clenched all her muscles in a kind of lockjaw. She came out of the spasm in a tremor of hysterical faith. She spoke her thought aloud in a fury: "It sha'n't be the last, it sha'n't, it sha'n't, by golly!" The feebleness of the expletive disgusted her. She tried to be powerful by way of powerful language. Before she knew it she ripped out a resounding oath that would have pleased the good Queen Bess. "By God, I'll pay my way!—honestly! like a man!"

All her powder exploded in that one detonation.

She fell over into a chair in horror. The blasphemy seemed to rattle about the little room. It terrified her. Mrs. Chivvis ran down the hall, carrying her everlasting sewing, and tapped on the door and asked:

"Did you call me, my dear? Are you ill?"

"No, thank you. I'm all right. I didn't say anything."

That was doubly false. She had said something. In the slang of the hour she had "said something." She had "said an earful," also a heartful.

Mrs. Chivvis supposed that what she had heard was some voice from the street, and went back along the hall, stitching as she walked.

Daphne took the check and went down to Bayard's apartment. Bayard was on his way to the pawnbroker's. Leila was in his room. Old Wesley sat in a chair facing a wall. He seemed to see through it. Daphne went to him and put the check in his hand, explaining what it was.

"It's all I ever earned, daddy, and I want you to have it."

He looked at it and smiled and tears fairly shot out of his eyes. He patted her hand between his and said:

"Why, honey, I couldn't take your poor little earnings! Not for anything in this world."

"Please, daddy; it would make me ever so happy!"

"But it would kill me! You don't want to do that, do you? You must spend it on yourself. Buy yourself something nice with it."

"I'll buy myself a picture of you."

She told of her longing for a photograph of him, but did not tell him of her need of it as a talisman. He laughed aloud at this incredible way of spending money, till she began suddenly to cry. He had no answer to that argument except yes. Then she began to laugh. They decided to stop at a photographer's on the way to the five-thirty train.

Daphne ran out and cashed Reben's check at the grocer's, much to the relief of Reben's bookkeeper, whose books had been held up by the missing check.

Daphne asked for the privilege of taking her father to the train, and Bayard was so busy figuring where to put the cash he had on hand that he consented to stop at home.

Daphne went first to the gallery of a photographer

whose show-case on Fifth Avenue had displayed some strong and veracious portraits of men. The photographer's prices staggered Daphne and she protested, but he answered, dolefully:

"I'd give a thousand dollars for one photograph of my father."

That settled it. Daphne gave him the order and he made Wesley comfortable as one could be at a photographer's, walked about him, engaging him in conversation and pressing the bulb surreptitiously when he caught Wesley off his guard. He filled many plates with Wesley's expressions and assured Daphne that he had had success. But it would take some days before proofs could be sent.

Daphne hung back to warn him: "Don't you retouch a single wrinkle. I love every one of 'em!"

Wesley was curious, without vanity, to see how he looked, but he had to hurry away to his train.

Daphne went with him as far as the gate. She was stopped there because she had neither a ticket for the train nor a platform-pass from the station-master.

She hugged her father almost to suffocation and they tried to cheer each other up till the last moment. Then he left her, jostled through the gate awkwardly, and awkwardly turned back to wave to her and throw her kisses.

She watched him dwindling down the long platform. He was a mere manikin when he reached his place and waved to her before he vanished through the magic door of the train.

She waved to him with her handkerchief, and when he was gone she buried her eyes in it. Her partings with her father had marked epochs in her life. She wondered what destiny would do to her between now and the next then. She felt forlorn, afraid for his life on the train, afraid for her soul in the perils before it, and so sorry for him and for herself that she could not help boo-hooing a little.

Destiny did not keep her waiting, for while she was strangling her sobs as best she could she heard a voice over her shoulder. It said:

"Aha, gel, at last I have you in me power."

"Mr. Duane!" she gasped as she turned to meet his smile with another. "And where have you been all this long while?"

"A lot you've cared," he growled. "Did you ever telephone me as you promised you would? No! Were you always out when I telephoned? Yes! Did you let me call on you? You did not! When at last it penetrated my thick hide that you were actually giving me a hint that you didn't want me round and that you had thrown me overboard, neck and crop, I grew very proud. I refused to call on you again."

"I'm awfully sor-ry," she said, and her voice broke.

"Sorry" was a dangerous word for her at that moment, and her sobs were beginning again, when he made a vigorous effort to talk them down.

The crowds in the station were too well preoccupied with their own errands to notice a girl crying, and to the gatemen farewell tears were no luxury.

Duane tried the best he could to help her. He was saying: "You don't want to know what happened, so I'll tell you. I went abroad! Yes, went abroad. I was going to renounce a life of virtue and enter Monte Carlo. I'd read so many stories about parents dragging their daughters to Europe to get unwelcome suitors out of their minds that I thought I'd try it on myself. I dragged myself aboard a steamer and swore I'd forget you. It was hard at first, but it was easier when I landed in Paris. I was having a bully time and just getting so I didn't think of you more than once or twice a week when this idiotic war broke out and chased me home. And now you've broken in on me and begun disturbing the peace again. What do you mean by it?

"And I find you hugging and kissing a beautiful old

gentleman. Of course you'll tell me it was your father, but why should I believe you? You don't tell me the truth. I was on my way up to Stockbridge, but I had to solve this mystery."

Under the shelter of his garrulity she had reconquered herself and she smiled at him and his welcome clownishness. He was the only person she had seen for some time who had taken life cheerfully, or whose smile was not more tragic than tears.

He went on: "And now I suppose I've got to miss my train and my golf and all that while I take you home in a taxi. You're far too pretty to be running around loose in a mob like this."

She shook her head. "You mustn't miss your train, Mr. Duane, or your golf. I'm used to going about alone, and I've got to get useder to it. I'm going home in the subway. Good-by and thank you."

She put out her hand formally, and he took it. It was like a soft, sun-warmed flower in his palm, and he clung to it. Its warmth seemed to reach through his blood to his heart and to make it ache.

"I must go. You can't put me off again!" he said. "I will take you home!" He turned to call a redcap standing in solemn patience beside two traveling-bags and a bristling golf-bag. "Porter, take my things to the parcel-room and bring me the check."

"No," said Daphne, hastily. "I mustn't! You mustn't! Really! I mean it! Good-by!"

She walked away so rapidly that he could not follow her without unseemly haste. She heard him call, sharply: "Porter, never mind the parcel-room. Come along to the dammed train."

Her success in escaping him was so complete that she rather regretted it. When she reached the apartment she found Leila almost prostrated from the effects of her altruism and from the fact that Bayard was in one of his tantrums.

A special-delivery letter had just come from Dutilh's shop. It said that Mr. Dutilh was arriving from Paris with his winter models, and since he would have to pay a large sum at the customs-house it was regrettably necessary to beg Mr. Kip to send by return mail a check for the inclosed bill, which was long past due.

And now the briefly adjourned laws of finance were reassembled. Leila's short reign was over; her extravagance had again found her out and demanded punishment. The gown she had bought, and was asked to pay for, had been worn shabby, danced to shreds in Newport. But the bill was as bright as ever.

Bayard was so fagged with his weeks of discouragement that he was as irascible as a veteran of the gout whose toe has been stepped on. When Daphne walked in he was denouncing Leila in excellent form. He used Daphne as a further club.

"My poor sister sent back the gown she bought! But you—you bought more!"

Daphne realized how much this would endear her to Leila and she took immediate flight. She found the Chivvises in a state of tension. Mr. Chivvis was not usually home before half past six. Daphne felt an omen in the way they looked at her when they acknowledged her entrance.

She went to her room in a state of foreboding misery. She had not paid her board for several weeks. She had not mentioned the fact to Mrs. Chivvis, nor Mrs. Chivvis to her, though the non-payment of a board bill is one of the self-evident truths that landladies usually discuss with freedom.

A few minutes later Mrs. Chivvis tapped on the door, her thimble making a sharp clack. She brought her sewing with her and sewed as she said: "May I sit down a moment? Thank you." She kept her eyes on the seam while she talked.

"Well, Miss Kip, the war has reached us also at last. My husband lost his position to-day."

"Yes? Oh, how horrible!" Daphne gasped, with double sincerity.

"The office was closed unexpectedly by an involuntary petition in bankruptcy. His salary was not paid last week nor this, and—well—we don't want to inconvenience you, but—"

"I understand," said Daphne. "I'll give you what I can."

She took her poor little wealth from her hand-bag. She had paid ten of the fifty to the photographer as a deposit. She gave Mrs. Chivvis twenty-five dollars, and promised her more.

Mrs. Chivvis was very grateful and went down the hall, smiling a little over her seam.

CHAPTER XLIV

CLAY called that evening. He was exhausted with a day of tramping the town, looking for work. He was too weary to talk and he fell asleep twice during one of Mr. Chivvis' commentaries on the probable effects of the imminent capture of Paris by the irresistible Germans. The French government had already moved to Bordeaux and— But Clay had read it all in a dozen different newspapers, and he passed away.

Daphne was restless. Mr. Chivvis was on her nerves. Clay was not pretty, asleep, sitting up with his jaw dropped and his hands hanging down, palms forward, like an ape's. She was enjoying another of the woes of marriage without its privileges.

The Chivvises began to yawn, and Mrs. Chivvis finally bade the startled Clay "Good evening." She had been brought up to believe that it was indelicate for a woman to bid a man "Good night."

Clay, left alone with Daphne, attempted a drowsy caress, but she felt insulted and she snapped at him:

"If you're only walking in your sleep, you'd better walk yourself out of here and go to bed."

His apology was incoherent and she was indignantly curt with him at the door. She went to her room and sat at the window, staring down at the dark swarm of watchers before the bulletin-boards.

All day and all night there were little knots of people there. They gathered in clumps about fierce debaters, and foreign reservists and hyphenated Americans wrangled on the merits and the outcome of the campaigns.

Daphne could not sleep. The military and political

phases of the conflict interested her only in the vaguest way. The stories of devastation and slaughter and starvation overwhelmed her sympathies. She longed for millions to spend upon the armies of despair. But she could not pay her board bill. She wanted to go out into the streets and walk her restlessness away, but nice young girls could not walk the streets at night without being misunderstood.

She had told her brother that she did not have to starve or sin, because she had a father, a brother, a lover to protect her from want. And now her father and her brother and her lover were all in dire predicament, staggering blindly in a fog of debt.

Suppose her father's train ran off the track or into another train. A spread rail, a block signal overlooked, a switch left unlocked, might bring doom upon his train as on so many others. She shivered at the horror of her father's loss. She shivered again at the thought of what it would mean to her.

Suppose the Chivvises turned her out. Why should they feed her for nothing when their own future was endangered?

What could Bayard do for her? or Clay? There was Mr. Duane, of course; but she could not take his money without paying him. And in what coin could she pay him? She trembled, and the breeze turned glacial.

She was not far from having to choose whether she should starve or— She watched the streets with a new and ghastly interest. She could see, on the brightly lighted pavements, various women plodding up and down at their doleful trade, peddling their cheap trash. For the first time she felt sorry for these venders of imitation love. They were women, after all, and perhaps they hated their work as much as she abhorred it.

They seemed to have poor success. She watched one of them, vague and small with distance, but manifestly young and slim and melancholy. She spoke to many men

of many sorts. None of them lingered. Some of them laughed at her. Some of them ignored her. She seemed to be very tired. Could the times be so hard that even sin had lost its market?

It was possible, then, even for the wicked to starve. She turned away from the window in a sick alarm at life. She undressed wearily and crept into her bed without saying her prayers. What was the use of praying? All Europe was at prayer.

The next morning was another day of the same shoddy pattern. She rose unrefreshed with only her fears renewed. She borrowed the Chivvises newspaper and, skipping the horrid advertisements of foreign barbarity and American dismay, turned to the last pages. The "Situations Wanted" columns were eloquently numerous and the "Help Wanted—Female" columns were few; still, she made a list of such places as there were. She wrote letters to all sorts of people who gave newspaper letter-box addresses, and she went out to call on all sorts of people who gave their street numbers.

The doors of the latter were attended by shabby queues like the box-offices at bargain matinées. And the queues were usually dismissed before Daphne was reached. Or if she reached the advertiser she found that he did not want her, or he had some trick of selling goods to the poor dupes of his fraudulently worded decoys.

The letters she wrote were not answered at all. She lost her postage as she had lost her car fares. Day after day went by and there was no comfort in existence. Bayard, Leila, Clay, the Chivvises, all cowered under the pall of misery that overcast the world. It seemed as if the end of the world, or at least the break-up of its civilization, had arrived without warning and without refuge.

CHAPTER XLV

DAPHNE had not told Mrs. Chivvis of her financial plight, nor of her father's, nor her brother's. She had simply let the days of payment go past one by one. She saw a chillier glitter in Mrs. Chivvis' eye and there was a constraint upon the conversation for many days.

Charles Lamb said that the lender was always shy and ashamed before the borrower; but Mrs. Chivvis was an involuntary creditor and Daphne was not a born debtor. She lacked the sustaining power of Leila's conviction that anything chargeable is a legitimate purchase. She was rather craven as a non-payer.

It is hard for two people to be good company when one owes the other money that the other needs. Mrs. Chivvis had surmised that Daphne's interest in the advertising columns, her long absences and her home-returnings in a state of despondent exhaustion, implied a hunt for employment, but while this was commendable it was not negotiable.

Mr. Chivvis was at home most of the time now, sitting about in his old clothes to save the others. He and his wife naturally talked of Daphne. Sometimes she overheard their undertones. Each seemed to urge the other to the attack. Finally, one evening Mrs. Chivvis made so bold as to call on Daphne in her room, and to say, after much improvising:

"I dislike to speak of it, Miss Kip, but—well—er—you see—the fact is—if you— The grocer is sending round in the morning for his last week's bill, and—if it's not inconvenient—"

Daphne felt sick with shame, but she had to confess, "I can't tell you how sorry I am, but I haven't any."

"Really? That's too bad!" Mrs. Chivvis said. She was hardly sorrier for herself than for Daphne. She tried to brighten them both with hope. "But you expect—no doubt you expect soon to—"

"I've been looking for—for some work to do, but there doesn't seem to be any."

"Oh, I see!" said Mrs. Chivvis, confirmed in her suspicions and reduced to silence. Daphne went on, after swallowing several cobblestones:

"But, of course, I've no right to be eating your food and staying on here as a guest. And I suppose I'd better give up my room, so that you can take in somebody who can pay."

Mrs. Chivvis was close, but she was not up to an eviction, and she gasped. "Oh, really!—I hardly think—I shouldn't like— Pardon me a minute."

She scurried away and Daphne faintly heard her holding parley with her husband. Then Daphne learned how it feels to have the jury out. She suffered horribly till Mrs. Chivvis came back and said with all the shame of a conscientious business soul committing an unbusiness-like extravagance:

"Mr. Chivvis agrees with me that we couldn't think of turning you out. That wouldn't be Christian, or Congregational—or anything. Of course, we're a little worried, but we had saved something and we sha'n't starve—not just yet. And I guess we can find enough for us all to eat for a while. So Mr. Chivvis says for you not to bother about it, and just make yourself at home."

Her hard voice crackled like an icicle snapping off the eaves in a spring sun; and before either of them quite understood it the hard eyes of both thawed; tears streamed, and they were in each other's arms.

Daphne was the better weeper of the two. Poor Mrs.

Chivvis could not be really lavish even with tears; but she did very well, for her.

Immediately they felt years better acquainted—old friends all of a sudden. They were laughing foolishly when an apologetic knock on the open door introduced Mr. Chivvis, who would no more have crossed the sill than he would have broken into the temple of Vesta. His name was Chivvis, not Clodius.

The surprised eyes of Daphne threw him into confusion, but he said: "I've been thinking, Miss Kip, that if you really want to work and aren't too particular what at—maybe I could get you a place at my old office, with the publishing-house. They turned me off, but the receivers are trying to keep the business going. They have to have a lot of—cr—ladies down there to address circulars and prospectuses and things, and maybe you could get in. Not much pay, but something's always better 'n nothing."

"Anything is better than nothing," said Daphne, "and it might be a beginning."

"It might, that's true," Chivvis exclaimed; he warmed as he thought of his secular church, the office. "There's one lady down there began at ten dollars a week—typewriting; now she's secretary to the vice-president of the company and gets eighteen—and only been there four years!"

Daphne wondered how old the lady would be before she earned her fifty thousand a year. But she accepted Mr. Chivvis' offer and a letter. And the firm accepted her under his auspices.

Now Daphne was truly a working-woman; not a dramatic artist with peculiar hours, but a toiler by the clock. She entered the office of the company at half past eight, punched her number on the time-register, and set to work addressing large envelopes. She wrote and wrote and wrote till twelve; at one she took up her pen again, and the afternoon went in an endless reiteration of dip

and write, till five-thirty. Then she joined the home-going panic and took the crowded subway to Columbus Circle.

She usually had to stand all the way, for men were more and more generally surrendering their old privileges of chivalry, particularly that of giving up their seats in trains.

The homeward ride took what strength remained to Daphne after the day's work, and she reached her nook in a state of regular collapse. Her hunger was the only antidote to her drowsiness. She went to bed at a working-woman's hour, slept like a scrub-lady, and when seven o'clock came in the morning she had to tear herself from sleep as from the recapturing arms of an octopus, limb by limb and faculty by faculty.

She was too tired at night to care much whether Clay called or not. Once or twice when he called she fell asleep on his shoulder, even while he protested against her degrading herself by such unnecessary drudgery. She did not want to tell him of her father's penury, and she had not the heart to remind him of his own, and she liked to have him dislike to have her work.

She plodded the treadmill, till at the end of her sixth day, her forty-eighth hour of transcribing names and addresses from the lists to the wrappers, she carried off a cash reward of eight dollars. This was not clear gain. Her street-car fares had totaled sixty cents, her lunches a dollar and a half; she had worn her costumes at the sleeves and damaged them with a few ink-spots, and her shoes were taking on a shabby nap.

It was not encouraging. She was exhausting herself and earning less than enough to pay for her room and board with the Chivvises. Her father had insisted on paying it at first, but he had forgotten it in his multitude of worries, and Daphne had assumed the debt.

Still she insisted that the labor was worth while, since it kept her occupied; besides, it was teaching her en-

durance and routine, and she was studying the stone walls of life against which the poor and improvident bruise their heads. About her was a little army of women doing the same work, plebeian young women, and pathetic elderly women, and all the intermediate types. They were shepherded by a kindly, ancient man who called them "ladies" and treated them as if they were.

At Daphne's right elbow was a finely carved old ivory who wrote all day like an automaton. She was manifestly a victim of early advantages followed by financial reverses. She spoke rarely, and coughed incessantly, while her little gray, corded, mottled hand everlastingly and exquisitely drew each name as if it were a monarch's engrossed on a state document.

At Daphne's left elbow was a large, fat girl whose pen rolled off large, fat letters. She sat behind a large, fat bosom which seemed to be in her way. She had to write around it and peer over it. She talked all the time about nothing of importance, laughed and fidgeted and asked questions that would have been impertinent if they had come from anything but a large, fat head.

Her name was Maria Pribik. She was a Bohemian of the second generation; but she was dyed in the wool with New-Yorkishness. She was an incessant optimist and kept reminding everybody to "cheer up, goils, the woisst might be woisser yet."

She said to Daphne: "You're a lady, ain't cha? I can tell. But say, you got a right to get married and knock off woikin'. Still, this ain't so woisse, not when you think of some of the homes some them married goils gotta live in, and then them sweat-shops and shoit-waist factories—Gawd! Was you ever in one them? Na? Gee, but choor lucky!"

Daphne's luck did not last long. The receivers found that the percentage of inquiries following upon the advertising and circularizing campaigns was hardly paying the postage. People were either too poor to buy books

or too busy with the molten history pouring from the caldrons of Europe. Yesterday's paper was ancient history enough.

The receivers closed down the business abruptly on a Saturday and instructed the poor old shepherd to announce to his flock that there would be no more work at present. It grieved him to spread the evil news. Daphne's heart stopped. Here she was again, learning again the dreadful significance of "Out of a job"—what the theatrical people called "at liberty."

The old-ivory lady next Daphne simply whispered, "Oh dear, oh dear!" and fell to rubbing her hands together.

Miss Pribik exploded: "Oh Gawd, ain't it the limit? And it was such a nice cool, clean job, too. Now I gotta go back to Goist." Still she repeated her war-cry, "Cheer up, goils, the woisst might be woisser yet!" till some of the dejected flock glared at her murderously.

She looked at Daphne and noted her gloom. "Say, kid, listen here. Whyn't choo come with me? I can land you a job at the Lar de Lucks. Guy name of Goist is the boss and he'll always gimme a job or any lady friend. He's kind of rough, but what's the diff? His money buys just as much as anybody's. We better beat it over there ahead this bunch."

Daphne murmured her hasty thanks and they left at once. Miss Pribik led the way to a huge building full of "Pants-Makers," "Nightshirt-Makers," "Waist-Makers," and publishers of calendars, favors, and subscription books. She asked for Mr. Gerst, saw him, beckoned him over, and hailed him with bravado:

"Well, Mist' Goist, here I am, back to the mines. This is me friend Kip. I want you should give her a job—and me, too."

Daphne faced Mr. Gerst's inspection without visible flinching, though she was uneasy within. Gerst was a large, flamboyant brute with eyes that seemed less to receive light than to send forth vision. He had an in-

quisitive and stripping gaze. But Daphne must endure it. After ransacking Daphne with his eyes, he grunted: "You look pretty good to me, kiddo. You can begin Monday."

"Thanks," said Daphne, humbly.

"I'm comin', too," said Miss Pribik.

"All right," said Gerst. "It's time you did. We'll take some of that beef off you." And he playfully pinched her arm.

She yelped: "Ouch! That hoits. Quit now! Be a gent'man, can't you?"

Gerst pinched her again for discipline. Miss Pribik started to speak to him with vigor, but checked herself and spoke in her most duchess manner. "Well, it's up to me to be a lady even if you can't ack as a gent'man should, you big Swede."

Gerst laughed. Adroitly evading his pincers, Miss Pribik led the way out, and Daphne trailed her outside. Miss Pribik said:

"That Goist guy is sure one case. He gets so fresh! Most the goils just hate it. But what can a party do if you need the money and your boss won't behave? Some them slave-drivers is all the time pawin' round, and if a goil don't like it they tell her right where to go. I hate to be swore at, don't choo? Once in a while a new goil takes a swipe at Goist, but if he gets gay with you, for Gawd's sake don't hit him or nothin'. He'd just as soon hit back as not. I seen him black a goil's eye once for bitin' him in a roughhouse."

Daphne loathed and feared the man already. He stood like a glowering menace in the path ahead of her.

CHAPTER XLVI

MONDAY morning at eight Daphne reported for work with the L'Art de Luxe Publishing Society, pronounced by its own people (who ought to know) "Lar de Lucks."

This firm was engaged in the peculiarly Anglo-Saxon business of grazing the censorship as closely as possible. It printed everything that it dared to print under the whimsically Puritanic eye of the law. Toward the authorities it turned the white side of a banner of culture, claiming to put in the hands of the people the noblest works of foreign genius and defying any but an impure mind to find impurity in its classic wares. The other side of the banner was purple and informed the customers by every prurient innuendo that the books were published in their entirety without expurgation. Vice has its hypocritical cant no less than religion.

The difficult thing is the interesting thing. There exists in the average mind a passionate longing to see in print the words and ideas that are tiresomely commonplace in thought and speech, but exceedingly rare in publication—as if the eye and ear were jealous of each other.

It was the business of the L'Art de Luxe company to promise the eye more than the law allowed it to produce. But it succeeded in persuading numbers of curiosity-tormented people to read through the works of many thorough masters like Balzac and De Maupassant. They rarely found exactly what they sought, but they must have scraped off some benefit in their journey. The "Society" had won a large success with a gaudily



LEILA felt a rapturous desire to kiss him and call
She was studying the models as they lounged a
much money does a model earn?"



es of gratitude. Daphne sat thinking, but not of clothes.
shop. Suddenly she spoke. "Oh, Mr. Dutilh, how

printed edition of Balzac, "strictly limited to one hundred numbered copies, of which this is No. —." They had sold several thousand of this hundred, and the name of "Bawlzac" was revered by the heads of the firm.

It was now issuing a similar edition of De Maupassant to a "carefully selected" list—carefully selected from every available source of names likely to be worn by people moneyed enough to subscribe. This edition was going well in spite of the war, and Bawlzac was being shoved from his throne by "Dee Moppason."

Daphne knew nothing of all this. Her task was once more to address envelopes and make out index-cards showing what "literature" had been sent to each "prospect," with what result. If an "inquiry" did not speedily become an "order" it must receive the first "follow-up" and the various "hurry-ups" and finally the extra inducements.

Daphne neither knew nor cared how the names on the lists were come by—whether by purchase from patent-medicine or other companies, or by compilation from directories of directors, or college catalogues, or howsoever. The names flowed in at her eyes and out at her pen as if short-circuited from her mind.

One day, toward the end of her first week, she was startled to find before her a card bearing the legend "Duane, Thomas." His address was given, and the facts that he had bought the three-quarter-morocco Balzac, the half-leather Fielding and Smollett, and the levant Court Memoirs. He had not yet taken the bait for the De Maupassant. He was about to receive the supreme follow-up.

Daphne pondered his card and his taste. The record amused her; yet it pleased her. It was like him to take the soft, luxurious bindings. She imagined that his library had deep animal pelts on the floor and fathomless leather fauteuils. He probably already owned De Maupassant in the original.

She was shaken from her pensive mood by the sudden commotion of all the women. All eyes had seen the minute and the hour hands in conjunction at XII. Names were left off in the middle; pens fell from poised hands.

It was the custom of the women to bolt from their tables to their lunch-boxes or for the elevators, in which some descended to dairy restaurants and some to soda-fountains. Some did not eat at all. Daphne had usually patronized a quick-lunch room, one of the Childs string of immaculate ivory beads.

But to-day she had left home with nothing but her car fare. She would not borrow from the girls, even from the solicitous Miss Pribik. She would not accept a proffered banana or a sandwich. Miss Pribik assumed she was off her feed, and she let it go at that.

Those who brought their food with them ate it greedily and swiftly amid a clatter of gossip and repartee. The women were of a lower class than at Mr. Chivvis' firm, or less controlled. Their language was rough and coarse, and often appallingly vile.

The day being warm, as soon as the feast was over the women made for the fire-escapes, which were as large as piazzas. On these gridirons they crowded, bandying wits with other girls and with men on other fire-escapes or in the windows of other buildings. Daphne took the air awhile with the rest, but the shouts of the men in other windows and the answers of her companions drove her in.

Daphne found herself alone. She was glad of the quiet and the solitude, while it lasted—which was not long, for Gerst came back unexpectedly early.

His eye met Daphne's. He started toward her, and then, seeing that she glanced away, went on to his desk. He stood there manifestly irresolute a moment. He glanced at Daphne again, at the fire-escapes, at the empty room. Then he went to the first of the tables and with labored carelessness inspected the work of the

absentee. He drifted along the aisle toward Daphne, throwing her now and then an interrogative smile that filled her with a fierce anxiety.

She knew his reputation. She had seen his vulgar scuffles with some of the girls, had heard his odious words. She was convinced that he was about to pay her the horrible compliment of his attention.

Her heart began to flutter with fear and wrath. She felt that if he spoke to her she would scream; if he put his hand on her shoulder or her chair she would kill him, with a pair of scissors or the knife with which she scraped off blots. . . . No, she must not kill him. But she would have to strike him on the mouth.

But that meant instant dismissal at the very least. He might smash his fist into her face or her breast or knock her to the floor with the back of his hand. She had seen too much of life recently to cherish longer the pretty myth that the poor are good to the poor. She had seen how shabby women fared with street-car conductors and subway guards. She had seen her own prestige dwindle as her clothes lost freshness.

But the violence of Gerst's resentment would be a detail. The horror was the mere thought of his touch.

There was time enough for her mind, racing like a propeller out of water, to ponder the mystery of the sacredness of person. Why should one's flesh creep at the thought of a mere touch? In the jams in the subway she endured the closest proximity of strange men. Yet she felt no offense in the contiguity.

But for this man even to approach her would be a smothering abomination—to be revenged with ferocity. A soul's body is like a nation's flag or its soil. Invasion must be repelled at any cost.

She rose quickly and tried to reach the fire-escape. That was the solution—to join the crowd.

But Gerst filled the aisle. She sidled past two tables into the next aisle. He laughed and sidled across to the

same aisle. She tried to hasten by. He put his arms out and snickered:

"What's the rush, girlie? Nobody hollered 'Fire!'"

"Let me pass, please," she mumbled.

"Aw, wait ta minute, wait ta minute, cancha? I got sump'n' nice to say to you. You know you're some squab. You ain't like these other hens. There's class to you. You're the classiest little dame's been in this bunch since I been here."

"Thank you," said Daphne, "and now, if you please, I'd like to get by."

"Wait ta minute, wait ta minute. What 'd you say if I was to ast you to go to a show ta-night, huh? What 'd you say?"

"Thank you. I have another— I couldn't."

"S'mother eve, then? Or to a dance, huh?"

"Thank you, I'm afraid I can't."

"Why not? Come on! Why not? 'Ain't I got class enough for you?"

"Oh yes, but— Please, let me by."

He stared at her, and his hands twitched, and his lips. His eyes ran over her face and her bosom as if she were a forbidden text. She was trying to remember what Duane had told her about the way to quell a man. She felt that she must give the theory another chance. It had succeeded before. With great difficulty and in all trepidation she parroted her old formula.

"Mr. Gerst, you don't have to flirt with me. I don't expect it, and I don't like it, so please let me go."

He stared at her, trying to understand her amazing foreign language. Then he sniffed with amused unbelief, dropped his hands, and stood aside.

Daphne could hardly believe her eyes. The charm had worked the third time! She darted forward to get away before the spell was broken. As she passed him—whether he suddenly changed his mind or had only pretended to acquiesce—he enveloped her in his arms.

She almost swooned in the onset of fear and the suffocation of his embrace. Then she fought him, striking, scratching, writhing. He crowded her against the nearest table and tried to reach her lips across her left elbow.

Her outflung right hand struck against an inkwell, recognized it as a weapon of a sort, and, clutching it, swept it up and emptied it into his face.

His satyric leer vanished in a black splash. His hands went to his drenched eyes. Daphne, released, dropped the inkwell and fled to the locker-room while he stamped about, howling like the blinded Cyclops. Daphne did not stay to taunt him nor to demand her wages. She caught a glimpse of faces at the fire-escape windows, but, hugging her hat and coat, she made good her escape.

She knew what she was escaping from, but not what to.

CHAPTER XLVII

DAPHNE scuttered for the subway as a fugitive rabbit to its burrow. But she was not a rabbit and she felt suffocated in the tunnel. She could not endure to be quiet in the presence of so many goggle eyes like aligned buttons. She left the train at the next station and walked rapidly to Fifth Avenue, and up it homeward.

The public luncheon hour was not quite ended and the lower mile of the Avenue, once devoted to the best shops and the most gorgeous shoppers, was now packed from wall to wall with immigrant garment-workers from the suit and cloak and pant and hat and sock and collar and shirt and nightshirt and pajama and underwear and woolen and linen and feather and fur and velvet and plush and silk and pseudo-silk and leather and celluloid and hide and bone and button and all the other industries that shabby people toil over for the decoration of others.

The workers, most of them new come to this country, brought with them their foreign habit of standing in the street, as well as their native smells and beards and cigarettes. Daphne had never before happened upon this outpouring from the lofts which floods the Avenue at twelve and vanishes at one.

She pushed her way through, stifled and afraid of the poor boors who stared at her without budging to let her pass. She had for them all the dread one nation has for the poor of another. They were all as odious as Gerst to her, and she hated toil and toilers.

When she had escaped from this mob into the clean and brilliant avenue above Twenty-third Street the disgust of

her experience clung about her memory. Alternately she shivered with repugnance at the recollection of Gerst's touch, and fevered with wrath at his presumption and at the injustice of her plight. She had been willing to work hard and humbly, and she had been driven from the refuge of labor by the insolence of a foreman. She must endure either the fire of insult or the ice of charity. She had but a choice among shames. Life was awfully unjust.

She wanted to telephone Clay and tell him the dire news. But she felt sure that he would not rest till he had called on Gerst and beaten him to the ground. That would be sickening; and there was danger of publicity and prosecution.

There was a worse peril yet, the peril of non-success. Gerst was ever so much bigger than Clay. Even the dignity of Clay's revenge might not insure its victory.

It must be disconcerting to be a woman and dependent on a champion and then to find that protector confronted by a bigger man. Suddenly she remembered Elsa's dilemma as she had seen it once when "Lohengrin" had been performed in Cleveland by a traveling opera company. It had taken all the power of Wagner's name and all the beauty of his music to keep her from laughing aloud when, in answer to fat Elsa's vociferous prayer to Heaven, a stuffed swan had come jiggling and zigzagging between the canvas waves, drawing a submerged wagon on which a fat little Lohengrin teetered. He was about six inches shorter than Elsa.

Lohengrin had been manifestly most afraid of falling overboard. He had stepped ashore gingerly and brought his great paunch with him. He had sung in a high, wiry voice like a jews'-harp the farewell to the swan, and the stage-hands had drawn it off with the least possible effect of miracle.

The Telramund whom Lohengrin must conquer had been a huge fellow of barbaric voice, and when Lohengrin beat him to earth with a sword that he could hardly

wield the irreverent young man who sat next to Daphne had whispered, "Say, that fight was fixed. Telly laid down for the gate receipts."

Daphne recalled this as she walked up the Avenue, but she did not smile now as then. Clay was no fat Teutonic tenor, but he was not half so burly as Gerst.

Clay was sturdy and brave and Daphne loved him in a motherly way among other ways, but this was no time for her to mother him or for him to permit her to. This was a time when a woman needed an irresistible defender. But how could there be an irresistible defender for every woman? Daphne had drawn one who had every other charm except great muscle. She must therefore not tell her lover of her insult lest she accomplish nothing but his degradation in addition to her own. Clay's temper would drive him to attack Gerst, but it would not furnish him with thews. No fine sense of remorse would restrain a wretch like Gerst. He would whip Clay, batter him, perhaps cripple him. It was an outrageous situation.

It seemed to Daphne to render love as ridiculous as the theory that the laboring-man and his people and problems are subjects for pity. The laborer's chief danger, as she saw it, was from other laborers, from foremen, forewomen, bosses, policemen, not from the rich.

She wondered what new job she could get. She had had enough of the simple humble. She wanted some taste of elegance. Passing a book-store with its displays of the wares of the appalling number of writers, she decided that she would like to read manuscripts for a publishing-house, or review books. She saw the portrait of an actress in the window of a picture-gallery. She would like to be a dramatic critic or an art critic.

She laughed a little at herself for the impudence of her ambition. She had failed as an actress and so she would be a critic. She could not make manuscripts, therefore she would pass upon them. She could not paint, therefore she would make a good judge. She laughed at the joke of

it. She was vaguely aware that the joke was not new, but it amused her dismal little soul.

She walked rapidly for the comfort of the restlessness, but there was no comfortable destination ahead of her. She found Mrs. Chivvis at home with her disconsolate husband. Daphne dared not tell them just yet that she had lost her place. She would tell them when she got another one. For fear that they might ask why she was home so early, she went down to Bayard's apartment.

She wanted to tell Bayard and Leila what had happened. It was safe, she felt sure. Bayard would never attack Gerst. He would be more likely to rail at Daphne for bringing the trouble on herself.

Leila let her in at the door, but she was in a militant humor. She said, "Hello!" grimly and stepped back for Daphne to enter. Daphne found Bayard still aglow with interrupted quarrel. He said, "Hello!" with a dismal connotation.

Daphne was in despair. She could not find a haven even here. She sighed: "Sorry I interrupted you. I'll get out and leave you in peace."

"In peace!" Bayard and Leila almost fought over the sarcastic echo.

Both seized Daphne when she made for the door. They had fought so long and frequently without audience that they wanted a listener.

"What do you suppose that brother of yours orders me to do now?" said Leila, whirling Daphne toward her.

"I can't imagine," said Daphne, incredulous of Bayard's ordering Leila to do anything.

"He wants me to go to Dutilh and put up a poor mouth and humiliate myself."

Bayard snatched Daphne to him and stormed: "She bought the clothes, didn't she, without consulting me? She wouldn't send 'em back as you did yours; she wore 'em out, paraded 'em before other men there in Newport while I was slaving here. And now that Dutilh insists

on money that I haven't got, and can't get, she won't even go explain it to him. That's all I ask her—to explain it to him and ask him to be patient so that I won't be sued. I can't stand that. I've had every other calamity but I've never been sued for debt."

"Ah, he won't sue," Leila broke in. "He doesn't want to lose a good customer."

"Good customer!" Bayard mocked. "Takes his clothes and doesn't pay! That's her idea of a good customer! Dutilh's bookkeeper wrote for money to meet him when he landed. I never sent it. Now he's back. He got through the customs somehow, and here's another letter—very urgent. Here's the same bill with an epitaph on it, '*Long past due*'! He'll put it in a collector's hands. I would myself in his place. I ask Leila to go tell him about my hard luck and my fine prospects—play fair with him—and with me. But will she do it? No! She won't do anything for me."

Daphne was swayed by his emotion. She pleaded: "Why don't you, Leila? You have such winning ways. I'll go with you."

Leila hesitated, then answered by taking up her hat and slapping it on her head. She paused, took it off again, and went to her room, unhooking her gown as she went; she knew that in asking favors one should wear one's best appearances.

Daphne and Bayard, left alone, did not dare to speak. They felt drawn together by the family distress; and Leila seemed to be a foreign anarch. But they were afraid to anger her.

Bayard took a safer topic. He grumbled, "How are you getting along at your office?"

Daphne felt unable to intrude her own troubles on his. She shrugged her shoulders. It is a kind of white lie, the shrug.

Bayard was too harassed to interest himself further. "Hang on to your job as long as you can, old girl, for

you'll have to support us all, I guess. You're the only one of us that can get a job or earn a cent. That's the advantage of being a pretty girl."

Daphne was almost moved to tell him some of the disadvantages of being a pretty girl, but she felt that the time was unfit for exploiting her own woes. She ached for some one to disclose them to, but she withheld them.

Leila came in, arrayed in her very finest. She was smiling in the contentment of beauty at its best. "When you ask credit you've got to look as if you didn't need it," she said. She kissed Bayard a doleful good-by and went out with Daphne. She was going to take a taxi, but she had no money. She asked Daphne for a loan, but Daphne shook her head and said:

"You flatter me."

"We'll walk," said Leila. "It looks richer than riding in a 'bus. A millionairess walks for exercise, but there's no excuse for a 'bus except economy."

Daphne wanted to tell Leila about her adventure, but Leila had too many of her own miseries to recount. She walked less and less briskly the nearer they came to Dutilh's. She said that she would rather die than face him; but after pausing outside his delectable windows and staring at the silken treasures with the eyes of a ragged gamine, she seized Daphne's hand and rushed the door.

CHAPTER XLVIII

THEY found Dutilh in a state of unusual excitement and exhaustion. There were few customers in his place and he left them to the other salespeople. He advanced on Leila and Daphne and gave a hand to each.

"Why, oh why in the name of Paul Poiret didn't you come in a week ago? The pirates have taken every decent gown I had. The sewing-women are working like mad to reproduce 'em, but there's nothing left fit to show, except to Pittsburg and Plattsburg tourists. Where did you get that awful rag you have on?"

"Here," said Leila.

"Oh, of course, I remember. It's beautiful. Sit down. I'm dead. Have a cigarette? Have a cup of tea? Oh, Miss Galvey—tea for three, please. *Nom d'un nom d'un boule-dogue* — excuse my French, but—did you hear of my latest escapade? Well, what if you did? I'll tell you again.

"You know I dashed over to Paris, as usual, to get the choice models. The big American department stores carried off the first ones—trash made up especially for the *canaille*. The real designs were kept back for me, of course. I was dawdling about, studying things, when—bang! bang! the war broke out! Paris went crazy. All the men dressmakers were called to arms—they dropped their scissors and tape-measures and grabbed guns. The women were worse, dashing about bidding good-by to their husbands and their lovers—some of 'em so excited they couldn't tell which was which.

"The shops were madhouses. Money was not to be

had. Drafts, letters of credit, paper money—they wouldn't look at. *Conspuez le* dollar bill.

"Americans were in a stampede for home. The trains wouldn't take 'em, of course. The trains were for soldiers. I had my car with me, thank God! Motored down from Dieppe, you know. An inspiration came to me. I went to two or three of the big houses. I said, 'Look here, messieurs, mesdames, you'd better give me those models of yours. They're no good to you. The Americans are in flight. You can't sell anything to the French but mourning. The Germans will take them without pay. Better trust me. I'll send you the money as soon as you are ready for it.' They saw the idea. '*En servez vous*,' they said. And I did.

"I went through those shops like a Kansas cyclone going through a clothes-line. I snatched gowns off of hangers and out of closets and show-windows and off of the backs of squealing models. Half of the dresses were only pinned together. I slammed 'em into boxes and tied 'em up and dumped 'em into my car. Then I met an American who said:

"'Have you got a passport?'

"I had no passport—never had.

"He said: 'You can't get out of town without one.'

"I went to the Embassy. Gawd! a line of people a mile long waiting there!

"Inspiration number two: I bought a big English flag. I said, 'I am an English officer, called home in a hurry to save England and France.' I put the flag on my car, and tooted my horn and didn't stop for anybody. The people recognized the flag and I was cheered all the way to the coast. '*Vive l'Angleterre! Vive l'officier anglais!*'

"Wouldn't it kill you? Me! They called me admiral, general, Keeshnair, Prince de Gales, *capitaine*, everything but dressmaker. Regiments turned out of the road to make way for me. I was saluted everywhere.

"I made Dieppe, rolled on to the last boat, got to Southampton, caught the first boat out, and here I am.

"Some stunt for the little dressmaker, eh? Talk about Sheridan's ride! and Paul Revere! and the Johnstown flood man!

"Other New York dressmakers were caught. They waited for passports, they waited for trains. Some of 'em are waiting yet. As soon as the dealers here heard of my good luck they came down on my shop like a Ku-Klux Klan. I couldn't turn 'em away. This place was like an auction-room. They fought for my model gowns, tore 'em away from me and one another. How much do you suppose I sold in two days? You'll never guess. Twenty-five thousand dollars' worth. Bad, eh?"

He sank back and quaffed his tea with a godlike serenity. He was ecstatic over his exploit, and with reason. Other men had carried good news and bad and military tidings. He had brought to the women of America salvation from wearing their last year's fashions or, worse yet, those of domestic design.

The relief of Lucknow and of Peking were nothing to the achievement of Dutilh and the other fearless importers who escaped from the siege of Europe by devious ways and brought home the sacred messages of the fashion gods.

Dutilh was made gracious by glory: "Come back in a few days and I'll have replicas of the models," he said. "I didn't forget either of you when I was in Paris. I have a siren gown for you, Mrs. Kip, that will break your heart with joy. You'd murder to get it. And as for you, Miss Kip—well, you'll simply be indecently demure in the one I call 'Innocence.'"

Daphne was a trifle shocked, but Leila's eyes filled with tears at the mockery of such talk. She moaned: "I didn't come to buy. I came to apologize and beg for mercy. I owe you a lot of money, and I haven't a cent."

"Who has? What of it? Nobody's paying anybody. My twenty-five thousand dollars is mostly credit."

"But I had an urgent letter from your bookkeeper, or somebody."

"Don't mind her. She gets excited. Nobody pays me. You come in and get another gown and you'll catch a millionaire with it."

It was hard for Dutilh to keep his clients clear in his memory.

Leila rebuked him, "I already have a husband."

He smiled slyly and unashamed. "Only one? How exclusive! He must be young and handsome."

"He is."

"Well, then we'll have to help you to keep him. I'll sell you another gown, one of those that I call the Husband-holders."

"But I can't afford it."

"And I can't afford to have my children going round in last year's rags. You do as you're told and come around next week. I'll get my money out of you some day. Trust me for that."

Leila felt a rapturous desire to kiss him and call him names of gratitude. He was generous by impulse and patient, and nobody's fool at that. The thoughts of tailors are long, long thoughts.

Daphne sat thinking, but not of clothes. The labor problem had almost defeminized her. She was studying the models as they lounged about the shop. Suddenly she spoke. "Oh, Mr. Dutilh, how much money does a model earn?"

"How can I tell, my dear? Besides, what business is it of mine? Oh, I beg your pardon. See her blush. The first blush I've seen in my shop for a year. I wish I could have it framed. I know what you mean. You mean what salary do I pay? Common clothes-horses get fifteen or sixteen dollars. Better lookers get better pay. You're worth a thousand a week at least. Want a job?"

"Yes."

His smile was quenched. He studied her across his

cup. His keen little eyes had learned to pierce to women's souls through their pretenses. He saw the anxiety in her curiosity.

"What's the matter?" he said. "Has he run off with another girl, or do you expect to go fishing for a millionaire in my pond?"

"I need the money. I've had hard luck." Daphne said it so solemnly that he grew solemn, too.

"That's too bad! Well, I've got more girls now than I need. Nobody as beautiful as you, of course, but—I suppose I could let some one go."

"Oh, I couldn't think of that!"

"Neither could I. Well, I'll squeeze you in somewhere. But I can't pay you as much as you are worth. Would—umm—twenty dollars a week interest you?"

"It would fascinate me."

"All right, you're engaged. You can begin next Monday." He turned to Leila. "Do you want a job, too?"

"No, thank you!" Leila snapped. Her eyes were blacker than ever with rage, and her red-white cheeks curdled with shame. She could not trust herself to speak. Her brunette beauty had the threat of a storm-loaded thundercloud.

When she and Daphne had taken their departure, Leila still dared not speak to Daphne on the way home. She dared not speak to her at all.

CHAPTER XLIX

DAPHNE knew that Leila was angry and why she was. Daphne grew angry on her own account, asking herself what sort of a shameless pride was this of Leila's that felt honor in stealing Dutilh's credit and disgrace in earning his cash?

There was a sultry, sister-in-law atmosphere about them when they reached home. Daphne went in with Leila, because she lacked the courage for a farewell.

Leila brought triumph to Bayard. She told him what Dutilh had told her of his willingness to wait for his money.

Bayard straightened up as Atlas did when Hercules took the world off his shoulders, for a moment. He embraced Leila and hailed her as an angel. When she had taken full toll of her success, she told Bayard what Daphne had done. She told it simply, without emphasis, knowing its effect.

Bayard laughed. "Nonsense, Leila; you've had your sense of humor scared out of you! Daphne's only joking. She's not crazy—yet." Then he saw the grimness in the prettiness of Daphne. His eyes interrogated hers, and she nodded with vigor. "Daphne!" he roared. "You asked Dutilh for a position among his models? Great Lord of heaven, I'll telegraph father to come take you home."

"That's all right," Daphne taunted. "You'll send the message collect, and he'll never be able to pay for it, so he'll never know what he missed."

"But surely we are not such beggars that—"

"Who has any money? Who has anything left to pawn?"

"But there must be other jobs."

"Get me one."

"What about the one you've got?"

Then she told him of her encounter with the foreman Gerst. He suffered for her and for himself. He threatened to kill Gerst; but Daphne said:

"That won't pay anybody's board but your own—in jail."

"There must be some other way."

"Show me."

They discussed all the ways they could think of, without encouragment. Bayard telephoned to friends of his in magazine and newspaper offices. Some of them had now lost their own places. They laughed at the suggestion of an inexperienced girl gaining a position where veterans with families to feed were being cast out in droves.

Clay Wimburn came in after dinner. His protests against Daphne's project were louder than Bayard's, with the added rancor of jealousy. But he had no substitute to offer, and when Daphne, noting that his chain was not looped across his waistcoat, as usual, asked him what time it was, he turned a greenish yellow with shame.

"And it was a gift from your mother, wasn't it?" Daphne asked.

He nodded. He was answered and silenced.

"I'm sorry," said Daphne.

She forebore to tell him of the Gerst affair. He was deep enough in the mire. He went away a little later and she returned to her cubbyhole with the Chivvises.

Her progress in love seemed to be as backward as in business. She found herself wishing that Clay had never come to Cleveland or that she had never left there. It was treason, but she could not help it.

She found Mrs. Chivvis alone and at work, as usual, but not at her usual work.

"What's that you're doing?" Daphne asked, not caring much.

"Filet. See. It's pretty, isn't it?"

"Exquisite."

There was a delicate difficulty, a womanish futility, about the little square web that appealed to Daphne after the coarse realities of her day.

"Is it very hard to learn?"

"It's easy to learn, but hard to do," said Mrs. Chivvis.

"Teach me, will you? I need something to keep me from going crazy."

"Certainly, my dear. Sit down. You see, you just—"

There followed a string of technical terms in the formidable dynamics of crochet—highly improper words to repeat in a text that might fall into the hands of grown-up males.

Daphne comprehended them, and they aroused her to strange enthusiasm. The task gathered and soothed her distracted faculties as hardly anything else could have done. As a troubled man can forget almost any grief or worry in a game of poker or billiards, so to women there is a mystic nepenthe in webmaking. They must have spider's blood in them.

The nearest Daphne came to remembering her business fret was in a dreamy murmur: "It's a pity there isn't a lot of money in this sort of thing."

"The stores charge big prices for it," said Mrs. Chivvis, "but the women who embroider and make lace never make any money."

"There ought to be some way of marketing it better," Daphne said, but did not seize the idea that trailed across her mind. She was diverted from it to an immediate problem. "What do I do now? I'm stuck."

She worked until her eyes ached with the unaccustomed strain. She put down the mesh and sat idle, watching Mrs. Chivvis plod.

When Mrs. Chivvis asked her how her office work was

going she felt impelled to tell her that it was gone. She told her about Gerst.

Mrs. Chivvis was properly horrified—and a little mystified. She had never been subjected to such adventures. There was an arctic circle about her that froze flirtation at forty yards.

She admitted that Daphne was justified in resigning in haste, though it was an expensive admission for her, since Daphne was resigning wages that she owed to Mrs. Chivvis.

Daphne tried to encourage her landlady by telling of her engagement to work for Dutilh. This alarmed Mrs. Chivvis all the more. She did not approve of dressmakers' models. Their trade seemed unwomanly in its very womanliness.

"There must be some better way for a girl to earn money."

"For instance—" was Daphne's countercheck.

"If you and I could go into some partnership."

"Such as—" said Daphne, hiding her smile at the thought of so misfit a combination.

"I don't know," Mrs. Chivvis sighed. "But I'm afraid I shall have to earn some money some way. Poor Mr. Chivvis is falling ill with idleness and worry. What a funny day we're living in! In Europe the women are all doing men's work while the men shoot at one another. In Europe the women are driving street-cars and harvesting crops and making ammunition."

"But in America there's no work for anybody to do," said Daphne. "The men don't do anything but read bulletin-boards and extras and argue about the news. The women haven't even that to do."

"Still there's always a way where there's a will," Mrs. Chivvis insisted. "You have what I haven't—you have pluck and initiative and the courage to go out and meet people. I'm only good to take care of the pennies and keep the accounts. We'd make a good team if we could find a good wagon to draw."

"It would be fine!" said Daphne. "Well, I may dream of something. My eyes are full of sand. Good night."

"Good night, my dear. And don't go to that dressmaker to-morrow. Wait a few days. Something better may turn up."

"I'm not engaged till next week," Daphne yawned. "And I may be lucky and dead by then. That's the only solution I can see to my problems."

"Oh! My dear!" Mrs. Chivvis gasped, being religious. "Death doesn't solve your problems; it begins them."

"Then there's no rest anywhere," Daphne sighed. "I might as well go on living. Good night!"

But the next morning she was very much alive again, and so were her problems. They waited for her, grinning across the foot of her bed. They followed her about all day, followed her in her pursuit of work. When Clay Wimburn called they infested the place like a troop of younger brothers. They trailed at heel when Clay and she went to the Park, and mocked their love. And the autumnal air was ominously cold; it whispered of winter.

Dead leaves fell on them now and then with a ghostly effect of helpless victims letting go their hold on life.

Even when the lovers huddled together for shelter from the gloom and for warmth from the chill, there were other terrors, old battles with one another to fear and to wage again.

When Daphne was with Clay she was afraid of him and herself. And when he was away from her, she was afraid for him and of other women. She knew how terrible his longings were, and she wondered if they might not drive him elsewhere for their quieting.

She had heard that men were not governed by the same laws of fidelity as women, and she was visited by fantastic nightmares of the hours he spent out of her watch and ward. That boarding-house where he lived—he had spoken of the strange people there, the queer women—

what might not happen there? Woman-like, she trusted other women even less than she trusted men.

When she questioned Clay he was indignant or pretended to be; but then a man would deny in any case. The more brazen his guilt the more brazen his denial would be.

Thus Daphne's love tormented her and itself with every engine of torture that jealousy and suspicion and doubt could invent.

Unable to find any answer to her fantastic riddles or any escape from them, she turned morose and made her lover unhappier than he was. She told herself that she would lose him by her very fear of losing him. She told him that he must not come to see her so often; he must seek other and gayer company. She thought she would make herself more valuable if less accessible. She tried to find diversions for herself that she might keep her soul fresh and refreshing. But diversions cost money, and none of her people had any.

Those were black days for all America, suffering under the backfire from the sudden war and from the long fatigue of hard times. There were weeks of dread lest the United States be sucked into the maelstrom at a time when it was least prepared in money, arms, or spirit. Never, perhaps, in human chronicle have so many people looked with such bewildered misery on so many people locked in such multifarious carnage.

At such a time, as in an epoch of plague, there came a desperate need of a respite from woe; soldiers skylarked in trenches; war widows danced in gay colors; festivals were held in the name of charity; frivolities and vices were resorted to that good souls might renew themselves for the awful work before them.

It was in such a mood of imperative demand for cheer of some sort that Tom Duane swam back into Daphne's gloomy sky.

Daphne had come home after a morning of rebuffs. She was heartsore and footsore, in shabby boots that she could not replace. She was called to the telephone, and Duane's voice chanted in her ear with a tone of peculiarly comforting melancholy.

"That you, Miss Kip? This is me, Mr. Duane. Poor Tom Duane. Poor Tom's a-cold. I came back to town unexpectedly early. I have something important to say to you. Will you take a little ride with me in my car?"

"Why not?" she said, with a laugh. She was glad that he could not see the tears that gushed across her eyelids.

"Three cheers for you! I'll be there in a jiffy. You couldn't arrange to dine with me, could you? Or could you?"

She made ready to say "No," but she had heard Mrs. Chivvis planning a New England boiled dinner that night. She thought of one of Duane's compositions, and her very soul clamored against the remembered odor of corned beef and cabbage and carrots.

Again she answered, "Why not?"

Duane's voice rang back: "Tip-top! You've made me happy as a box of pups. I'm half-way there already."

CHAPTER L

DAPHNE prinked and preened with a haste and a zest she had not known for a week. She told herself that she had every right to this little picnic. Clay was in New Jersey hunting for a job. She would not be denying him any of her society. She would be the better companion to him if she had a little taste of cheerfulness. If she did not interpolate some bright moment in her life soon she would go mad and die. There were arguments enough to smother any impulse she may have felt to reproach herself.

When Duane came up to the door he greeted her with the beaming joyousness of a rising sun. He praised her and thanked her for lending him her time. The elevator that took their bodies down took her spirits up. She noted that he had not brought his big car with his chauffeur. He stowed her into a powerful roadster built for two. But she had no inclination to protest. The car caught them away and they sped through Central Park with lyrical, with dithyrambic, sweep.

"The trees!—how wonderful they are!" she cried.

They had been wonderful for weeks, but she had thought them dismal.

"They're nothing to what they are in Westchester," said Duane. "I came through on the train yesterday. The hills are—well, they're—they'll drive you crazy with the colors. We're going to have a look at them and dine up there somewhere."

"Are we?" was all she said.

And he said, "We are."

After they left the Park and re-entered the hard streets she found the courage to remind him: "But you said you had something important to tell me. What was it?"

He would not tell her while they dodged through the heavy traffic and out of the long city; and then she was too busy with the gorgeous fabric of the visible world to question him again.

The hills were a giant's garden, each tree and shrub aglow in one enormous flower. Mighty tulip-trees dispread and released broad leaves turning to amber, while cedar and juniper and fir enriched the russet world with their persistent green. Fields of sumach-bushes flaunted velvet pompoms of ox-blood hue, and barberry-bushes were hung with rubies. Birches clustered in tremulous throngs like bathers surprised. But the maple-trees, best beloved of autumn, crowded the ridges in multitudes as at a pageant, belatedly arrayed in sunset crimsons and apple emeralds and hammered gold.

The still air was flecked with falling leaves, the roads crackled with them, and the hollows were pools of their color. Daphne exclaimed aloud upon the incessant glory. Her heart was full of gratitude to the Lord for making His lands so beautiful and her lips were quick with gratitude to Tom Duane for bringing her out to see them. Thus encouraged, he explained his business at last.

"Miss Kip, you've played the very devil with me. I thought I was immune to the lover germ, but—well, I told you the truth about going abroad to shake off the—the fever—the Daphnitis that attacked me. But I couldn't get you out of my mind for long, or out of my heart at all. I'm a sick man, Miss Kip, a lovesick man."

"Mr. Duane, you mustn't— I can't allow you—really!"

"Oh yes, you can!" he said, and sent the car ahead with a plunge. "You're going to listen to me for once. You can't help yourself. I'm not going to harm you. I just

want you to help me a little. I went up in the Berkshires and tried to get my sanity back, but, damn it! I couldn't! I couldn't even play golf—or cards—or drink. People drive me crazy. They do nothing but talk war, and brag about their sympathies and their losses. I've had good luck. I sold the market short and pulled down a big pile of money before the Exchange closed. I've been able to send a lot of cash to the poor beggars over there. But I can't get interested in anything or anybody but you."

"Mr. Duane, please— You oughtn't to— I beg you. I have no right—"

"Oh, I know you're engaged to Clay Wimburn. He's a nice kid. I'm not one-two-three with him. I'm not trying to cut him out—I couldn't if I would. I like him. I'd like to help him, and your brother, too. I don't mean to be impertinent, either; but—well, the main thing is, I want to beg you to let me see you once in a while.

"Some of my friends are going over to Europe as nurses. Muriel Schuyler has chartered a steamer and loaded it with medicines and doctors and toys. Poor Mrs. Merithew is opening a hospital in Paris. But you don't need to go abroad and nurse wounded Frenchmen. You've got a patient right here. I won't bother you much, or annoy you with my odious caresses. I'll keep my promise. But I want to be allowed to hang round you at a little distance.

"I want to take you out riding and dining and dancing and—you can take Wimburn along if you've got to, but I want you to save my life somehow. And, by the Lord Harry! I think it will save yours. You don't look well, my dear—Miss Kip. It breaks my heart to see it. No, I don't believe you're getting as much fun out of life as you ought to. There isn't much fun in the world any more, but what little's left is very precious, and I want you to get all that's going. Won't you let me help you go after it? Won't you?"

They swung up to a height that commanded a vast reach of the Hudson. Between its banks it seemed to be a river of wine. The western sky was like a forest of autumn leaves with the last sad red pitifully beautiful, since it must turn so soon to rust.

In a spirit of haste the fleetly spinning wheels murmured, "Why not, why not, why not, why-notwhynotwhynot?"

CHAPTER LI

BEFORE the sunset had quite relinquished the sky the moon was over the horizon—the harvest moon, huge and close and of a meditative mien. It paled and dwindled as it climbed, but its power seemed to grow.

It left Daphne more alone with Duane, a little afraid of him and of the gloaming. She told him that they must have gone pretty far away from town, and it might be better to turn back.

He consented with a reassuring grace, but laid his course away from the river, now dim and blue, into the inland hills. They emerged above the chain of Croton lakes and ran across the big dam and wound along the shore, crossing iron bridge after iron bridge, till they came to a little roadside inn whose lights had a yellow warmth.

"We're stopping here for dinner, if you don't mind," said Duane.

Daphne was a trifle ill at ease, but she was hungry, too, and the adventure was exhilarating. There were not many people at the tables, and they were of an adventurous cast as well.

Daphne went to bathe her dusty face and arrange her wind-blown hair. When she rejoined Duane a small orchestra was playing, and they were hardly seated before two professional dancers stepped into the oasis between the tables and began to prance and posture. Even here, out in the wilderness!

When Duane had given his order he asked Daphne if she would join the rest of the diners who had left their

chairs to fox-trot. She shook her head and he did not urge her.

But by the time their dinner was served and eaten the nagging, interminable music had played away nearly all her scruples.

She felt an overwhelming need of rhythmic expression. Her feet were dancing about her chair in spite of her. It grew conspicuous not to dance, here where every one else was up and at it from the first chord to the last. The very tunes were satirical of dignity, or the pretense of it. If it were wrong to dance here it was wrong to be here at all. Being here, it was stupid to lose the chance to fling off melancholy. It was selfish to deny her cavalier the well-earned reward of a jig. If Clay Wimburn had been with them she would have danced with Duane; it was spiteful sophistry to refuse him now.

At length, when Duane looked at her with an appealing smile, she smiled back, nodded, and rose. He leaped to his feet and took her in his arms.

Somehow, it was not mere dancing now. He had told her that he loved her. There was in his embrace an eagerness that was full of deference, but full of delight as well. After all, she was alone with him in a company that seemed not to be very respectable, and was growing less so every hour.

Her feet and all her limbs and every muscle of her reveled in the gambol, but her heart and mind and conscience were troubling her till she stopped short at last and said:

"I'm sorry, but I—I'd rather not dance any more—here."

Duane paused in a moment's chagrin. Then he sighed: "All right."

They retreated to their table, and he looked at her sadly, and she sadly at him. Then he seemed to like her even better than before, and he said, with a very tender smile:

"Want to go home?"

"If you don't mind."

When they came out upon the veranda of the hotel the lake was a vast charger of frosted silver among the hills. They stood admiring it for a moment and the music from the hotel seemed to come from another world. He helped her into the car and they whisked away southerly.

He returned to the road along the Hudson, and it was so beautiful in the moonglow that it seemed a pity to hurry through the wonderland at such speed. And what was she going back to that she should be in such haste?

She hinted as much to Duane, and he bettered the suggestion. Not only did he check the speed, but at one wooded cliffside with a vista of peculiar majesty he wheeled out of the road and stopped the car, shut down the chuttering engine and turned off the strenuous lights.

The landscape seemed to close in upon them more intimately, with a kind of affection.

For a long while neither of them spoke. It was enough to gaze at the Hudson, seeming to move through the azure universe no faster than a shining glacier.

Duane was wondering what Daphne was thinking of, or if she were thinking at all? Was she not merely regarding the scene as animals do? as a gazelle might, or a beautiful hound, or perhaps a tree—that slim, naked birch that shook its misty tresses so tenderly over their very heads.

Duane himself was hardly thinking. He was less musing on the poetry of the view than serving as a mere portion of it.

They sat utterly content till Duane shook off the blissful stupor. They could not stay here thus forever. They could not stay much longer. It was growing cold and late.

He did not dare to look at Daphne. He did not quite

need to. He could imagine her pretty head and the drowsy, adorable eyes, the lips pursed with childish solemnity, the throat stem in the urn contour of her shoulders, the vaselike curves of her young torso. He imagined these from memory, for now they were swaddled in a thick motor-coat. But without turning his head he could see her little hands clasped idly at her knees, the little gloves turned back at the wrist. He thought that he would like to take them in his—he would like to take all of her in his arms, into his heart, into his keeping.

But there was such content in just sitting there by her that he could not venture a gesture or a touch that might provoke a conflict. He knew women well enough to know that even if she were impatient for his caresses, and indignant at their delay, she would have to protest against them at first. She would have to struggle a little. All her inheritance from nature would compel that. And he could not endure the thought of even the most delicate conflict.

And yet he dreaded the thought of letting her go. He wanted her for his own forever—at least for as much of forever as he could foresee.

Yet he did not want to marry her. He did not admire marriage in its results as he saw them in other people. Like many another, he cherished wicked ideals because the every-day virtues worked out so imperfectly, so unbeautifully.

He sat thinking—desiring her warmly, yet coldly planning how to make her his without making himself too much hers. He was not altogether ruthless. He wanted to protect her as well as himself from those phases of himself that he had experienced before when he grew weary of people.

Daphne was musing almost as vaguely. On the river a yacht at anchor poised like a swan asleep. She would like to own a yacht. On the opposite side of the river

along the road she could see motor-cars like inquisitive crickets with gleaming eyes and feelers of light. She would like to own a motor or two.

She was a little cold, but she lingered for the beauty of the country and for the privilege of leisure. To-morrow there would be beauty and luxury here, but she would be seeking for work on the harsh streets. To-morrow night Clay would call with his despairs, his complaints; there would be hours more of that tantalism of thwarted love so agonizing that it resembled hate and brutality. And the next day more hunt for work, more toil, more shabbiness, and no escape.

Why could she not have loved a rich man just as well? Why could she not devote her life to these beautiful, ennobling, glorifying experiences? If she were the wife of as rich a man as this man at her side, how quickly she could help her father and Bayard and the poor old lady who lost her place with the publishers and the wretched victims of the massacre in Europe and so many people—yes, and even Clay, poor, dear, hopeless, helpless Clay Wimburn, to whom she had brought nothing but expense of money and heartache and torture.

She was sure that Mr. Duane would help them if she asked him to. Was it not her duty to ask him, to make him, even at the cost perhaps of accepting his love? If she loved him she would not need to hunt for work; she would be no burden on such wealth as his.

Suddenly but quietly upon this current of her thoughts a thought of Duane's was launched like a skiff congenial to the tide. He spoke almost as softly as a thought, at first with a quaint shock such as a boat makes, launched.

"How often do you go to church?" he said, whimsically.

"Why—never, I'm afraid," she gasped in surprise.

"When did you go last?"

"When mamma was here. We went once to Saint Bartholomew's."

"Why?"

"To see the clothes, I guess."

"You're honest, anyway, but not very religious, are you?"

"Why, yes— Well, no. I mean to be, but— Oh, I don't know."

"You were planning to be married in church?"

"Such funny questions! Yes, of course."

"Why?"

"Oh, it wouldn't be nice not to."

"You don't believe in divorce, then?"

"Oh yes—yes, indeed—if people don't get along together. I think it's wicked for people to live together if they don't love each other."

"It's love, then, that makes marriage sacred?"

"Yes. Yes, indeed! Of course!"

"Love, rather than religion, eh?"

"Love is a religion—kind of."

"If people loved each other a lot and lived together, without going to church, would that be all right?"

"No, I wouldn't say that. Oh no!"

"But if love is a kind of religion—"

"Yes, I know—but— Well, it wouldn't be right."

"It needs a preacher, then?"

"Yes, of course; and yet—"

"Is it all right for two people who are not Christians to live together according to their creeds?"

"How do you mean?"

"Well, the people who lived before there were any Christians—or people who never heard of Christianity—was it all right for them to marry?"

"Of course."

"It's not any one formula, then, that makes marriage all right?"

"Of course not, it's the—the—"

"The love?"

"I think so. It's hard to explain."

"Everything is, isn't it?"

"Terribly."

There was more silence. He took a cigar from his pocket, held it before her for permission. She said, "Please." He struck a match. She glanced at his face in the little lime-light of the match. It was very handsome. A pearl of drowsy luster gleamed in the soft folds of his tie. The hands sheltering the match were splendid hands.

His lips drawn back from his white teeth as they clenched the cigar were red and full, and as he puffed they were pursed with a kissing sound and motion.

She was startled to find herself observing these things. He blew out the match, and the vivid portrait of him was erased and lost in the shadow.

She trembled with a sudden emotion. Why was she here alone with this stranger, and talking of marriage in this cold way?

She watched the cigar-fire glow and fade and the little turbulent smoke-veils float into the air and die. One of them formed a wreath, a strange, frail, writhing circlet of blue filaments. It drifted past her and she put her finger into it—her ring-finger by some womanly instinct.

"Now you're married to me," said Duane.

There was a sudden movement of his hands as if to seize upon her. She recoiled a little; his hands did not pursue her. They went back to the steering-wheel and clung to it fiercely as he groaned:

"Daphne, I can't keep my promise! I can't! You've no right to ask me to."

"Mr. Duane!" she protested, and felt that the protest was feeble and ill-suited to the fact that she was brazen enough to be there with him at that hour.

He set his left elbow on the seat back of her and laid his cheek on the heel of his hand and stared at her. She turned from his eyes, but he gazed at her cheek, and she could feel the blood stirring there in a blush.

"If you loved me, would you marry me?" he said.

"I—I love— I'm going to marry—somebody else."

"When?"

"Some day."

"If you're not happy with him, will you leave him?"

"Oh, but I'll be happy with him."

"So many people have said that! You've seen how seldom it worked. If you ceased to love him, or he you, would you leave him?"

"*If* is a large order. Maybe."

"Wouldn't it be wiser if two people who thought they loved could live together for a while before they married?"

She felt her muscles set as if she would rise and run away from such words. "Mr. Duane! It would be horrible!"

"Why?"

"Because it would. You know it would."

"No, I don't know it. I don't even believe it."

"Do you mean to say that you would have two people live together without marriage—ugh!"

"Why *ugh?*"

"Because."

"*Because* is not a very convincing argument."

"It's a convinced argument."

"Why are you so convinced?"

"I don't think it's nice even to be talking of such things. Besides, it's growing late."

"It's not so late as it would be if you married a man and found that your marriage was a ghastly mistake. Then you would say *ugh!* again, wouldn't you?"

"Hadn't we better start back?"

"Please don't leave me just yet. This is very solemn to me. I've been studying you a long time, trying to get you out of my mind, and only getting you deeper in my heart. I love you."

"I don't believe it."

"I know it."

"Then you oughtn't to tell me."

"Not tell a woman you love her? Not try to save her from wrecking her life and my own?"

"How wrecking my—her life?"

"I believe that if you marry Clay Wimburn you'll be unhappy."

"How dare you!"

"Don't say that."

"I mean it! How dare you talk so about him?"

"Because I love you, and he's not the man for you."

"Why not?"

"He's poor."

"What's that got to do with it?"

"Everything. He can't give you a home. He can't buy you clothes. He can't support you."

"That's not his fault, just now—with the hard times and the war. And, anyway, I believe it's a woman's business to support herself."

"You're one of these new women, then?"

"Yes!"

"You don't believe in the old style of marriage?"

"Yes—no."

"You really don't believe in marriage at all."

"Oh, but I do."

"Not what the Church calls marriage. You don't believe in church, even."

"Yes, I do."

"No, you don't; for anybody that really believes in the Church has got to go often—go all the time."

"That's not true."

"Then nothing is. But I don't want to quarrel with you. I want you to love me."

"Please let's go home."

"To my home?"

That insolence was too appalling to answer, or even to gasp at, or protest against. It stunned her. He took advantage of her daze to explain, hurriedly:

"You're not going to be one of those silly, old-fashioned,

idiot girls that a man can't talk to earnestly and frankly, are you now? Of course you're not. You're not one of those poor things whose virtue consists in being insulted every time any one appeals to their intelligence, are you? No, you're a fine, brave soul, and you want to know the truth about truth, and so do I.

"I'm a decent enough fellow at heart. I want to do the right thing and live squarely as well as the next fellow. I've got a sense of honor, too, of a sort, and I take life pretty seriously.

"I've been studying life hard, especially the marriage business. Everywhere I look I see that it doesn't work. Young lovers and old lovers rush off to church or a justice of the peace and swear they'll love each other forever, and then they have a honeymoon and settle down into a life of boredom, or of quarrels in private and hypocrisy in public.

"The old idea was that the man was master and the woman's place was the home, and the ring was her badge of slavery. But women won't stand that any longer even in name. And men don't care for slaves. Women want to be equal and they ought to be—at least equal. They want to work and they've got a right to.

"I tell you, the world is all turned topsy-turvy the last few years. The old rules don't rule. They never did, but people pretended to believe in 'em. Now we're not so afraid of the truth in science or history or religion or anything. We want to know the truth and live by it.

"What they used to call the decent thing we call indecent. You said yourself that marriage without love was horrible. And it is; it's all quarrels and nagging and deceit. If people are faithful to each other morally they seem to quarrel all the more. Long ago I vowed I'd never marry, and I don't intend to. I don't want to marry you. But I want your life."

"Mr. Duane! Really, this is outrageous."

"No, it isn't! Hush and listen, honey—Miss Kip—

Daphne—whatever you'll let me call you. I told you I was stark, starving, crazy mad about you. When I think of you looking for work, living in that awful spare room of those God-awful Chivvises—when I think of you going from place to place at the mercy of such men as you're sure to meet—when I think of you waiting for poor Wimburn to get out of the poorhouse, I want to grab you in my arms and run away with you. It's my one religion, my one job to save you from what you're undergoing now and from the worse things ahead of you. It breaks my heart to see you in distress and anxiety; for I want you to have everything beautiful and cheerful in the world. And I can get it all for you. Let me! Let me love you and try to make you happy, won't you?"

He had crowded nearer and he held her fast against the door of the car.

There was an honesty about his devotion that quelled her contempt; there was a homage that quickened her pride; there was an appeal to her intelligence that called for an intelligent answer. She had listened to his heresy till it was too late to strike him.

Yet he was asking more than Gerst had asked. She was amazed at herself for listening, but she could not decide what to say or do.

While she fluttered from indecision to indecision, he flung the cigar from his right hand and groped for hers; his left hand came down from his cheek and his arm encircled her. She felt herself taken captive, her two hands in his, her shoulders urged into the hollow of his arms, his eyes burning on her cheek and his lips moving thither under the compulsion of some great power.

This was the second time he had broken his promise, but now she had no instinct of flight, or anger; she could not take insult from his worship. Yet she felt that she must emerge above it before it smothered her. She rose to her feet gently.

His right hand clung to hers; his left slid down to her

waist. He drew her toward him, staring up beseechingly. He laid his cheek against her left side like a child, the big man pleading to the little woman for mercy.

She felt sorry for him and for herself. She regretted that cruelty was her one unmistakable duty. She had no right to be kind, and charity would be a sin. She wrung her hands free from his with slow persuasion and shook her head pityingly.

He accepted the decision with a nod, but before she could escape from his arm she felt that he pressed his lips against her just above her heart. It was as if he had softly driven a nail into it. Tears flamed to her eyelids and fell on his hands as he carried them to his bent brow. He crossed them on the wheel and hid his face in them, groaning:

"Daphne! Daphne!"

She was more afraid of him now than ever. All the splendors he could promise her were nothing to that proffer of his longing.

While she waited in a battle of impulses, he regained self-control with self-contempt, in a general clench of resolution. "I apologize," he mumbled. "I'm a fool to think that you could love me."

And that was the next strongest plea after his grief. But he did not know what progress he had made toward her pitiful heart. He switched on the lights. Into the soft gloom they sent two grotesque prongs. He turned on the power and the engine throbbed like a heart. Then the car went forward with the force of an impatient gesture.

CHAPTER LII

THEY seemed to leave romance and its sweet sorrows where they had found them, and they returned to a world of fact and speed, tunneling the mystery with augers of searching radiance. Now and then other cars came up, mysteriously sheltered by their blinding headlights.

There was a sense of morning-after reality. Daphne told herself that she must not go out with Duane again, now that he had said that he loved her. It was a curious paradox that she must not trust herself to him because he cared greatly for her.

Duane did not speak till miles and miles of black road had run backward beneath their wheels. Then he grumbled, "What a fool I was to dream of such a thing!"

More miles went under before her curiosity led her to say, faintly, "What were you dreaming of?"

He laughed, and did not answer for another while. Then he laughed again.

"Do you really want to know?"

"I think so."

"Well, you couldn't hate me any more than you do, so I'll tell you. I said to myself that I would never be the slave of any woman.

"I thought I was safe, and I was till you came along. I've loved lots of women, and if you won't have me I'll love a lot more. But I'm never going to marry anybody if I can help it. It 'll take a shot-gun to get me to church. Your pretty face and ways caught me first, of course, but

then I saw how serious a little chick you were—trying to get a job because you didn't want to be a burden on a man! That hit me hard. It was something new.

"Maybe it's only the latest style in the way women are wearing their brains—and it may not last any longer than the hobble-skirt, but it's mighty becoming to you. When I got your idea I thought it was a wonder. I envied Wimburn. I said, 'He'll get the one wife in the world.'

"It's not that I am stingy about my money, not that I wouldn't take the greatest pleasure in pauperizing myself for the woman I loved, but that I want her to take my gifts as gifts, not as a tax or a salary. Some of these women think they are doing a man a tremendous favor by letting him support them. That doesn't get me a little bit. I believe a man does a woman just as much honor as she does him, and sacrifices a blamed sight more. He gives up his freedom, and if she gives up hers she's only giving up something she doesn't know how to use anyway."

Daphne had rarely found a man who would talk to her with Duane's frankness, and if there is anything that interests a woman more than another it is to hear womankind analyzed, even satirized. She was eager for more vinegar.

"You won't be shocked and angry?" he asked.

"I don't think so."

"You don't know how pleasant it is to talk life and love to a woman who doesn't rear up and feel insulted at everything. At first you gave me a couple of *How-dare-you's*, but they don't count. And if you do hate me a little more, why, so much the better. When I thought you had broken with Wimburn I said to myself, 'She's the one girl in the world for me. I'm going to ask her to marry me.' But I was afraid to, for I was afraid of marriage. And then—I— Well, I'd better not— Yes, I will. I said, 'She believes that men and women are equal and have equal rights, and she's going to get out and

hustle for herself, like a little man. Maybe she's emancipated herself from the Sunday-school library, and perhaps she would be willing to live life intelligently, rather than religiously. Maybe she could learn to love me well enough to go into a partnership of hearts.' That's what I said to myself. You mustn't think it's because I don't want to cleave to one woman; it's because I do. But I hate handcuffs. If you and I arranged it so that either one could be free just by walking out, then we would never want to be free. Everything you did for me would be a gift—a proof of love—not a tiresome obligation. Everything I did for you would be a lover's token of love—not a husband's income tax. Do you see? And now you know what I was dreaming of. What do you think of it?"

The answer to his long oration was complete silence. Daphne's blood was running cold at hearing such atheism preached at her by this man she had liked so well. She was frightened by his audacity; so frozen that she had not warmth enough left to be tempted toward either anger or sympathy.

Duane waited for his answer, and, not getting it, laughed harshly: "Well, that's that. The next number on our program will be a ballad entitled 'I Never Dream but I Bump My Head.' Go on! Marry Clay Wimburn on nothing a year and live miserably ever after."

She said nothing to this, either. Duane was in a wretched state of bafflement. He put the car to its paces, and it ripped through space at fifty miles an hour. Daphne had a new terror added to the load on her nerves.

The car went bounding up a steep incline toward the swerve of a headland cut in rigid silhouette by the far-reaching search-light of a car approaching from the other direction. Duane kept well to the outside of the road, but just as he met the other motor and winced in the dazzle of its lamps, a third car trying to pass it on the

curve hurtled into the narrow space with a blaze like lightning searing the eyes. There was a yelling and hooting of horns and a sense of disaster.

Daphne bent her head and prayed for life, but without faith. Duane, half blinded, swung his front wheels off the road and grazed a wall. The rear wheels were not quick enough. The other car smote them, crumpling the mudguard and slicing off the rear lamp.

Daphne was thrown this way and that, and it seemed that her spine must have snapped in a dozen places. When she opened her eyes again the car was standing still. Duane was yelling frightful curses over his shoulder and trying to make out the number of the assassin's car before it flashed around the curve. He did not succeed, and he was in too great a fury to think of apologizing to Daphne for his language. His wrath was succeeded by an equally fierce anxiety for her welfare. He turned to her with terrified questions, and his hands visited her face and her arms and shoulders. He held her hands fast and peered into her eyes while she promised him that she was not dead.

Then he returned to his wrath at the criminal recklessness of the other driver. His wrath had the usual motor consistency. No one was wilder than he or had narrower escapes, and no one had more hatred for other men's recklessness.

The car that had bested his did not return, but the other did, offering help from a safe distance till its identity was established. In the light of its lamp Duane got down and examined his own car. Besides the damages in the rear, it had sustained a complete fracture of the front axle, a twisted fender, and a shattered headlight.

The driver of the other car came up and joined the coroner's inquest. He stared at Duane, and cried in the tone of an English aristocrat, "Gobbless my soul, ain't you Tom Duane?"

Duane, blinking in the light, peered at him and said:

"Yop! I can't see you, but the voice would be Wetherell's."

"Right-o; it's me."

"It can't be. You're singing in opera in Brussels."

"Opera? That's very likely, with this war tearing the whole bl— Oh, pardon me, you're not alone. Nobody hurt, I hope and pray."

"No, but we're pretty far from home and country."

"I see! Humm! Pity I couldn't get the number of the swine that hit you. I rather fancy I'll have to give you a lift—what? I was out on a tangaroo-hunt, but that will wait—if you don't mind trusting yourself to bad company."

Duane lowered his voice anxiously. "Is it very bad?"

Wetherell put the mute on his voice. "As good as yours, I'll wager. But let's not go into family history. Come along and we'll take you to the next neutral port. That would be—"

"Yonkers."

"Oh yes. I fancy those were the Yonkers we came through a few miles back. Well, come along."

Duane was embarrassed, but he could do nothing except take Wetherell to his car and introduce him to Daphne. "Miss Kip," he said, "I've got to present Mr. Wetherell. He's used to the lime-light—the only living English tenor. He wants us to ride with him as far as Yonkers. We'll get another car there."

Wetherell came close and said: "Did he say Mrs. Kip? I can't see you, but I hope you are the fascinating Mrs. Kip I met at Newport. Have you forgotten me so soon?"

"I am Miss Kip," said Daphne.

"Oh, so sorry! I don't mean that, either. But my Mrs. Kip was a siren—Leila was her first name. I called her De-leila, you see. And she called me Samson. She was a—"

"She is my brother's wife," said Daphne.

"Oh, you don't tell me!" Wetherell gulped, and his abrupt silence was full of startling implications that alarmed Daphne, angered Duane, and threw Wetherell into confusion.

Duane helped Daphne to alight from the derelict and transferred her to the other car, where Wetherell introduced them to a mass of shadow whose name, "Mrs. Bettany," meant nothing to Daphne and everything to Duane.

He hesitated about allowing Daphne to ride in the same car with Mrs. Tom Johns Bettany, though he had been within the last half-hour urging Daphne to throw away her own reputation more heedlessly than Mrs. T. J. B. had ever scattered hers. But Daphne was already seated, and Wetherell was at the wheel, so Duane accepted the situation.

Wetherell, with the tact for which Englishmen are so famous abroad, proceeded to try to redeem Leila's reputation from his own report. He made it worse when he compelled Daphne to tell him her address.

Duane and Daphne were glad enough to reach a garage in Yonkers and escape from Wetherell's further graces.

Duane arranged to have a wrecking-crew sent out to his roadster, and chartered a touring-car and a chauffeur for the trip into New York.

He sat back with Daphne and murmured prayers for forgiveness because of the dangers he had carried her into and for the things he had said. He had meant them as the highest tribute, and if they sounded otherwise to her it was because his words were wild; but he assured her that his heart was hers and he couldn't imagine how he was to live without her.

Daphne's nerves had been overworked. She had been rushed from adventure to adventure of soul and body. She had been invited to enter a career of gorgeous sin, and she had been swept along the edge of a fearful disaster.

She had told Mrs. Chivvis that it would be lucky if she

were dead and all her problems solved, and she had come near to finding out what happens after death.

Her soul was tired of experiences, and she was homesick for the quietude of her own room. She was glad that Clay Wimburn was too poor to take her motoring or glittering. She was glad that he loved her and trusted her and she vowed that she would never play truant again in his absence.

At length they rounded Columbus Circle. It was after midnight, but crowds were reading the bulletins of war.

Daphne was not interested even in the battle of the Marne and the salvation of Paris. The car rolled on to the apartment-house, and there at the door stood Clay Wimburn. Her heart leaped with welcome, then sagged with dismay.

CHAPTER LIII

SOMETHING in Clay's attitude told Daphne that he had been there for hours. She could not throw off the air of guilt that his suspicion surrounded her with.

Duane had not seen Clay. He stepped down and handed Daphne out with all his affection and an extravagant courtesy. Daphne saw across his bent shoulders that Clay Wimburn was advancing in a blaze of wrath, his fists clenched.

She stepped quickly past Duane and caught Clay by the sleeves. There was a moment of fierce struggle. His quivering arms almost tore out her finger-nails, but the chauffeur could hardly have guessed that anything was wrong. Duane turned and, seeing Clay, drew close to discourage or to accept battle, or shelter Daphne with lies or muscles or in any necessary way.

Not many people were near, but a crowd is gathered instantly from nowhere in New York, and a crowd is a dreadful thing. Centuries of primeval passions were battling in these three people, and a few years of etiquette were holding them down.

Daphne was whispering, "Clay, wait, wait! Let me explain!"

Clay was huskily snarling: "It was beastly of you. I'll kill him for this!"

Duane was mumbling, politely, "Be a cad if you must, but don't raise a brawl on the street."

They moved up to the doorway and conferred in whispers with a casualness of manner that belied their frenzy. All three spoke at once. Clay accused Daphne

of playing double with him and he promised to "fix" Duane. Duane accused Clay of being unworthy of the name of man, and promised him the beating of his life. Daphne was distraught between them.

She implored Duane to leave her, and he obeyed at length with reluctance. When he had entered the car and moved away he seemed to take with him Daphne's last hope of escape from poverty or evil cheer.

Clay denounced Duane and her with equal bitterness. He confessed that he had tramped in vain the parts of New York City that lie in the state of New Jersey. He was so fagged with his many rebuffs and with his long vigil, and so convinced of Daphne's treachery, that he would not listen to her explanations. And in fact they sounded so unconvincing to herself that she gave up trying.

The lovers nagged each other to desperation. At length Daphne ordered Clay never to come near her again. He assured her that he never would, and advised her to sell herself to Tom Duane and get a good price. Then he staggered away on weary feet, and she went into the corridor to where the elevator-man slumbered in ignorance of the three-cornered war that had been fought on his door-step.

Mrs. Chivvis met Daphne at the door. Her recent affection had turned again to scorn, and she glowered at Daphne, who crept to her room in hopeless acceptance of the rôle of adventuress.

Tired as she was, she could not sleep. The clangor of the morning called her to the window. A gray day broke on a weary town. The problem of debt and food and new clothes dawned again. Everything was gray before her. The only haven was Duane's offer of love and homage and luxury. In her jaded eyes the ideals of loyalty to a fiancé who distrusted her, of submission to a landlady who despised her, of virtue in a world that



CENTURIES of primeval passions were battling in these three people, and a few years of etiquette were holding them down.

refused her opportunity to earn her way honestly—these duties took on a look of stupid romance and moonshine.

Wisdom seemed to lie in feathering her own nest, in acquiring diamonds and purple, in yielding her weary body to the arms of a lover who would take her tired hands in his and press his lips against her heart and sweep her through dances and scenes of every rapture.

Wisdom whispered her to take Duane at his word and try the great adventure. How could it bring her to worse confusion than she found about her now? And then the morning mail arrived and brought her a large envelope addressed in a strange hand. She opened it and took from it a sheaf of photographs.

Her father's image a dozen times repeated lay before her. The untouched proofs omitted never a line, never a wrinkle. The camera, like a remembering mirror, had seen and held each least trace of him, each silvered strand of hair, the little crow's-feet of laughter tracking around the eyes, the gleam of tears upon the lids, the furrows of suffering about the mouth; the collar too low and too big, the careless knot in the old tie, the pin askew; the whole dear sloven honesty of him.

One of the pictures looked straight at her. She recalled that once she had stood back of the photographer, and her father had caught her eye and smiled just as the bulb was pressed.

She had made him smile like that. What would his expression be when he learned that she had "listened to reason," ceased to be his daughter, and become Tom Duane's—

She shuddered back from the word and the thought. She forgot both in the joy of reunion with her father. All the philosophies and wisdoms and luxuries were answered by the logic of that smile.

She lifted his pictured lips to hers with filial eagerness and her tears pattered ruinously on the proof. She was satisfied to be what the jeweler in Cleveland had called her to Clay Wimburn—"old Wes Kip's girl."

CHAPTER LIV

MISERY may love company, yet take precious little joy from the neighborhood; for two poverties do not make a luxury; no, nor a hundred. Zero multiplied by infinity, indeed, would be a little more zero than before if it could.

In the winter of 1914–15 all the evil spirits seemed to be combining infinitely to pound all the good forces back into nothingness. Nations of the highest ideals were rendered maniac with onsets of fury which they themselves abhorred but could not resist. The entire planet wore a woebegone countenance.

In the gigantic total of humanity's problems, those of little Daphne Kip were ephemerally tiny; but they were important to her and therefore to her history. She was fighting out a war of nations within her own microcosm.

All her souls had arrayed themselves and joined in mêlée. The needs of happiness and of money and of security, the longing for adventure and experiment, fought for Duane and tried to carry her over to the alliance with him. Her love for her pauperish lover, Clay, her sense of honor, and the instinct for law and custom and respectability fought against Duane. Besides, she had a wholesome instinctive suspicion of pleasure gained without toil.

Then her father's photograph appeared and made her realize that more people were involved than just herself and her two lovers. For, after all, every triangle is really a polyhedron of numberless facets.

Wesley Kip's smile ended the battle in his daughter's

heart and put to rout the anti-social forces of Duane. She ranged the proofs along the top of her bureau and stood off admiring them and deciding which to select for finishing.

Suddenly she remembered Wetherell and his messages to Leila. She felt so renewedly virtuous herself that it seemed her duty to go down and rebuke Leila for her apparent philandering at Newport. She was also curious to see how guiltily Leila would receive the news that Wetherell had asked for her.

But she found Bayard at home for luncheon, and she was neither mad nor mean enough to confuse Leila before him. And this was rather for his sake than Leila's.

Leila was just informing Bayard that the butcher had delivered the morning's order no farther than the freight-elevator, and instructed his boy to send the meat up only after the money came down.

Bayard had no money and the chagrin of his situation was bitter. He snarled at Leila: "Tell the cub to take the meat back and eat it himself. Then I'll go over and butcher the butcher."

Leila dismissed the boy with a faint-hearted show of indignation. Then she came back and said, "And now we have no meat to eat."

Bayard was reduced to philosophy, the last resort of the desperate: "Well, the vegetarians say we ought never to eat meat, anyway. And the Lord knows we're feeding as well as the European monarchs. The morning paper says that the Kaiser is trying to show his people how little food he can get along with, and King George of England is dispensing with most of the ceremony in the dining-room. I suppose Queen Mary waits on the table and washes her own dishes. I suppose she has to shine her own crown.

"We're poor, but, my Lord! we're in grand company. Look at this cartoon of Cesare's in the *Sun*—Father

Knickerbocker turning his pockets inside out and not a penny in them. New York City has to borrow money on short-time notes at high interest to pay its own current bills.

"Next summer there'll be no free baths, no concerts, no improvements, no anything. Uncle Sam is poorer still, because he owes more. That's because the whole town, the whole country, the whole world, is run on the same fool principles that I've been running my life on since I got married."

"Oh, it's all my fault!" Leila broke in. "The whole war is my fault, I suppose!"

"Nothing is your fault, honey," said Bayard, benignantly. "It's mine and the male world's. We're all living beyond our income, spending to-day what we expect to get to-morrow, spending to-morrow what we expect to get next week. We gamble on our luck and our health; and the smallest mishap spills the beans all over the place.

"Look at Europe. All the countries over there were stumbling along under such debt that they wondered how they could meet the interest on the next pay-day. And now they are mortgaging their great-grandsons' property to pay for shooting their sons.

"It's the old Thirteenth Commandment that we've all been smashing to flinders. And, my God! what a punishment we're all getting! And it's only beginning."

Leila had no interest in generalities. When they grew more than so big, she could not see them at all. She ended Bayard's oration with a familiar untruth.

"It's always darkest before the dawn. Let's eat what we've got."

They sat down to a pitiful meal—meatless, maidless, mirthless—hardly more than the raw turnips and cold water of Colonel Sellers. Leila fetched what victual there was.

"May I help?" Daphne urged.

But Leila shook her head. "I'll let you wash the

dishes, though, for my hands are ruined. Just look at them!"

She held them out, and the white slendernesses were chafed and red. She had not wept over the European agonies, but tears of pity for her pretty hands came out on the sills of her eyes and she turned away. Poverty is never more hateful than when it gnaws at beauty. Leila broke down, whimpering:

"I can't stand everything: no servant, no money, no theaters, no friends, no food, no fun."

Bayard cowered under the childish pathos of this. He answered, somberly: "They're not having much fun in Belgium, either, or in the trenches in France or Germany, or anywhere. The poor in New York and all over the world are worse off than we are."

Leila did not want sententiousness. She flared up. "That doesn't cheer me any—to tell me about other people's miseries. It doesn't feed me to know that other people are hungry. I don't get any warmer from thinking of those poor soldiers knee-deep in the ice-water. I think of them all the time till I'm going crazy. I dream of them nights. I want to forget them for a while. I want to laugh once more before I forget how."

"I could use a smile or two myself," said Bayard. "I guess I'll go down to the club. Maybe somebody will stake me to a funny story."

"I haven't got any club," Leila groaned.

"Bring us home a funny story, anyway," Daphne called out.

"The kind he gets there," said Leila, "he'd better leave there."

Bayard shrugged into his overcoat and left without kissing either his wife or his sister good-by.

Leila went to the hall door to call him back. "What about some theater tickets for to-night or for a matinée this afternoon?"

"Theater tickets?" Bayard gasped. "When I can't buy a meal-ticket!"

"Well, I can do without bread, but I've got to have a little cake now and then, and if you don't take me somewhere I'll go with somebody else."

"Oh, it's like that, is it?" Bayard growled. And now he said what he had merely thought on his first breakfast after they came back from their honeymoon. "I didn't know that when I married you I was supposed to be booking myself as a continuous vaudeville entertainer. Suppose you entertain me a little with something besides complaints for once."

Leila thought of the many raptures she had entertained him with, including the jewels she had given him to pawn, and she was about to speak. But she was wise enough to know that they would rankle deeper left undisturbed. So she gulped hard and said nothing; and Bayard flung away.

Daphne and Leila went out to the kitchen, set the dishes in the pan, and the pan under the faucet. Leila turned on the hot water. Daphne pushed her away. She did not resist, but took up a towel and began to dry the plates. Daphne was glad to be at work.

"There's one good thing about a small meal," she chirped, "it makes less dishes to wash." Then, with as much trepidation as if she had been the accused instead of the accuser, she faltered: "Oh, say, Leila, do you remember a man named Wetherell?"

Leila dropped a plate. She said that it was hot. But other plates had been hot.

"Wetherell? Wetherell?" she pondered, aloud, with an unconvincing uncertainty. "I believe I do remember meeting somebody of that name. English, wasn't he?"

"Very."

"Oh yes. He was at Newport, I think. Why?"

"Oh, nothing. I met him last night, and he thought I was you."

"How could he?" Leila gasped. "We don't look the least alike."

"I was in the dark."

"In the dark! Good heavens! Where?"

Already Leila had gained the weather-gauge. Daphne had to confess her outing with Duane, the crash of the collision, and the return to Yonkers in Wetherell's car. Leila took advantage of the situation to interpolate:

"Good heavens! How could you? You of all people! And with Tom Duane! What would Clay think of it?"

Daphne had next to confess that she already knew what Clay thought of it. She told how he had met them on their return and tried to attack Duane, and what rage he had visited on herself.

She had not meant to tell all this; and now that it was out, she knew that she had no right to reproach Leila for having known Wetherell in Newport. She had no right even to suspect that Leila had overstepped any of the bounds of propriety. She herself had been wrongly accused by Clay on account of far more compromising circumstances than she could allege against Leila. She knew how innocent she had been. And still she was not convinced of Leila's innocence. She was merely silenced.

Leila's interest in Wetherell seemed to revive on recollection, and she contrasted the vivacity of her weeks at Newport in Wetherell's company with the gloom of her life at home.

Daphne listened to Leila's wails as long as she could endure them. Then she went back to her own room.

The westering sun was pouring in at her window and it rejoiced her. She fell back with a cry of despair. The proofs of her father's photographs, left on her bureau, had been preyed upon by the light. They had curled and darkened. The face that had looked at her and smiled with devoted trustfulness was nothing but a red-brown

blur. Even her father seemed to have deserted her, gone backward into the dark like Hamlet's father.

She felt a superstitous dread, a foreboding. She needed her father's smile. After all, she was only a young girl, alone in a big city, overwhelmed with hard and cruel times.

She resolved that she would order the photographs finished in permanent form. But that meant the paying of the photographer's bill, and the sum was beyond her reach.

Her heart turned in its loneliness toward Clay. She blamed herself now for furnishing his jealousy with an excuse. She felt sorry for him and visioned his forlorn moods. His very wrath was a proof of his love; and its violence, of its fervor.

She went so far as to telephone his boarding-house. She learned that he had moved away, and a stupid foreign maid could not repeat his new address intelligibly. Daphne was about to call up his college club. But she remembered his telling her that he was an exile from clubland, too—posted for non-payment of the dues and his house account.

She was in a distress of fear that Clay had been turned out of doors penniless. So great were her distress and her remorse, indeed, that when Duane called up and asked if he might take her riding she refused with a curtness that startled herself and frightened him from the telephone.

Immediately she regretted her discourtesy, for she remembered that Duane had hinted at his willingness to help Clay. He was capable even of that generosity! She wondered if Clay were capable of accepting it. The niceties of jealousy struck her as rather imbecile in the face of poverty. Feelings of delicacy were well named—they belonged only to people who could afford delicacies.

To bribe Duane's charity might be her duty for the sake of others; but if those others would not accept the fruits of her sacrifice, what then? And just how much would Duane charge her for his charity?

CHAPTER LV

THE next day her fears of Wetherell and of Leila were rekindled. She went down to ask Bayard to help her trace Clay. Bayard was out and Leila was on the point of leaving. She was dressed in her killingest frock and hat and generally accoutered for conquest.

"Aren't we grand!" Daphne cried. "You look like a million dollars. Where you off to?"

"Going for a little spin."

"Who with?"

Leila hesitated a moment, then answered, with a challenging defiance: "With Mr. Wetherell. Any objection?"

Daphne accepted the challenge: "I haven't, but Bayard might have. Have you told him?"

"Did you tell Clay you were going with Tom Duane?"

"No, but I wish I had told him—or hadn't gone. And, anyhow, you're married to Bayard."

"You are—or were—engaged to Clay." Leila was growing a trifle vicious in her thrusts, but she was even more embarrassing, polite: "Not that I blame you for going. You'd be a fool not to. Clay is about as much use as Bayard when it comes to remembering that a girl has a right to a little amusement now and then."

This was a kind of argument by jiu-jitsu. Daphne was floored by Leila's agreement. Leila said, to reassure her:

"I hope you don't suspect me of any wicked intentions. Mr. Wetherell has never forgotten that I'm married, and neither have I. And I shall be chaperoned. He is taking another woman along."

"I wonder if it's that Mrs. Bettany?" Daphne said.

Leila was on the alert. "What Mrs. Bettany? Not Mrs. T. J. B.? What do you know about her?"

"She was with Mr. Wetherell the other night."

"She was? Oh, Lord, then he's lost! If that harpy has her claws on him, he's gone."

"What do you care?"

"I haven't so many cavaliers that I can afford to lose one. And Mrs. T. J. B.'s reputation isn't such that it will help me any to be seen with her."

"Hadn't you better stay at home, then?" Daphne suggested, eagerly.

"Home? Do you mean this hole when you say home? Not if Mrs. T. J. B. were the devil's first divorced wife would I miss this day. Good-by!" She opened the door, then closed it again to say: "Still, you needn't mention my little picnic to Bayard. It's all I can do to live with him now. I'll be back before he is. Promise?"

Daphne promised under duress and Leila went. Daphne disapproved and felt afraid; but when Bayard came in unexpectedly early and asked for Leila, Daphne lied inevitably and said she did not know where she was.

Finally Leila came back, her hair a little wind-blown, her cheeks abloom with new roses, her eyes sparkling dangerously bright.

"Where've you been all this while?" said Bayard.

"Window-wishing," said Leila.

Daphne loathed the duplicity, but held her whist. Still, Bayard was her brother, her own blood and kin, and after several days of Leila's excursions, increasingly prolonged, Daphne felt that her complicated duty required her to tell Bayard the truth. One afternoon she achieved that most odious and dubious duty of loyalty, telling on one member of a couple to the other.

She tried to be casual about it, but Bayard caught fire at once. He was already in a state of tindery irritability,

and Daphne's efforts to reassure him as to Leila's innocence of any guile only angered him the more.

He kept leaning out of the window and staring down into the street. Finally, espying Leila in Wetherell's car when it approached the apartment-house, he dashed to the elevator and met the two at the curb as Clay had met Duane and Daphne. Curbstones are famous crisis-places, little Rubicons. People who step out of carriages or into them step into so many situations.

Bayard was quite as furious as Clay had been, but held himself in better control. When Leila got out she was startled to see him standing at her elbow. There was nothing for her to do but make the introductions.

"Oh, it's you, dear!" she fluttered. "I want you to meet Mr. Wetherell. Mr. Wetherell, my husband."

"Ah, really!" Wetherell exclaimed, trying to conceal his uneasiness. "This is a bit of luck! I've heard so much about you! Your wife does nothing but sing your praises."

"Won't you come up?" said Bayard, ominously.

"Er, thanks—no, not to-day. I'm a trifle late to an—er—appointment."

"Then I'll have a word with you here," said Bayard. "Run along, Leila; I'll join you in a minute."

He said it pleasantly, but Leila was terrified. The spectacle of rival bucks locking horns in her dispute is not altogether enjoyable to a civilized doe. Leila went into the vestibule and watched through the glass door, expecting a combat. She saw a colloquy in dumb show, but there was nothing alarming in the actions. She could not hear Bayard saying:

"Mr. Wetherell, I'd thank you to pay your attentions elsewhere."

"What's that?" Wetherell gasped at the abrupt attack.

"Your attentions to Mrs. Kip are very distasteful to me."

"My dear fellow, I hope you don't imagine for one

moment that— Why, your wife is the finest little girl in the world!"

"That's for me to say, not you!"

"My word! this is amazing!"

"It is, indeed. It will be more than that if you come around again."

"Oh, I say, I can't have this, you know."

"Oh yes, you can, and you'll have worse if you're not careful."

"By Jove! I— Look here, what's the meaning of such astonishing behavior?"

"You're an Englishman, aren't you?"

"I am."

"Had you heard that your country was at war?"

"I had."

"Well, a big strapping fellow like you ought to be over there fighting for his country instead of looking for trouble here."

Wetherell's panic at the domestic situation was forgotten in the attack on his patriotism. He drew himself up with an unconsciously military automatism and said, "I fancy I'm doing my country as much service here as I could be over there."

"More, perhaps," Bayard sneered, with contemptuous irony. "But that's your business, not mine. Mrs. Kip is my business and I don't intend to have her subjected to your—your attentions. I'm trying to be neutral, but by— Well, I've warned you. Good day!"

He was quivering with battle fervor and he could hardly remember that he was on the public sidewalk. He turned away and left Wetherell muttering, "Of all the blighters I ever—"

Bayard joined Leila in the vestibule and they went up in the elevator together. She waited till they were in their own apartment before she demanded an account of the conversation.

He told her in a rage and she flew into another. She

divided her wrath between Bayard and Daphne. There was enough for both. Daphne tried to escape, but, being cornered, proceeded to fight back, whereupon Leila denounced her to Bayard and told of her ride with Duane. In Leila's version Daphne had no reputation left; though she said again that she did not blame Daphne for seeking a little escape from the monotony of her poverty, she blamed her only for being a cat and a scandal-bearer, one who was more careful about minding other people's reputations than protecting her own.

It was a right good fight and getting well beyond the bounds of discretion when the telephone announced that Clay Wimburn was calling.

Nobody imaginable would have been welcome in that battle-field, but Clay seemed peculiarly ill-timed. The only thing those three agreed on was that they could not see him then. Bayard went to the telephone and called down:

"Did you tell Mr. Wimburn we were in?"

"Er, no sir; I told him I'd see was you."

"Then tell him we're out."

"Yes, sir."

Bayard had an uncanny feeling that Clay was hearing all this, and in a moment the hall-man called up again to say:

"Mr. Wimburn says he's naturally got to see you."

"We're out, I told you."

Evidently the telephone was taken from the hall-man's hand, for Clay's voice roared in Bayard's ear:

"I hear you, you old villain. I know you're in, and I'm coming up. It's a matter of life and death. I'm on my way up now."

Bayard turned to the two women with the news. Daphne gasped, "Great heavens! What disaster is it now?" and thought of everything horrible at once, her favorite terror being a womanly intuition that Clay had killed Duane and fled to Bayard's apartments for refuge from the law.

CHAPTER LVI

IT seemed decenter that Leila and Daphne should disappear, since Bayard had said that they were all out. The women retreated to Leila's room as a good coign of audition.

When Bayard opened the door Clay swept in like a March gale. He flung himself at Bayard and clenched his elbows in his hands and roared:

"Bayard! Bayard! It's come! We're rich! We're made! Eureka! Uneeda! Munitions! Wow!"

Bayard stared at him and sighed patiently: "What have you been taking? Laughing-gas?"

"I've been taking contracts."

"Contracts? There ain't no such animals!"

"Oh yes, there are. And I've nailed one, a hippopotamus! A regular giasticutus!"

"If you will go to the bath-room and hold your head under the cold faucet you'll get great relief and so will I."

"I'll give you relief. Listen! The other night while I was trailing a job in darkest New Jersey I ran across a little clue, and a little man who told me a little secret. The Germans have been getting ready for this war for years, piling up guns and ammunition for *Der Tag*. The other countries were caught only half ready. They have stopped the Germans on the Marne, but they've been using their shells at such a rate that the famine is near. Their only hope is to buy supplies of us. They're going to dump enough contracts on this country to furnish about a million dollars to every citizen. They're afraid

of exciting attention and stirring up opposition from the peace-at-any-price party and the hyphenated Americans, so their agents are pussy-footing round to distribute contracts quietly.

"The Bethlehem Steel Company has gathered in a big lot of them, and I had a tip that the stock was going to boom; so are a lot of other stocks. I'd sell my right arm for a little cash. But there's no market for detached right arms, so I used mine to sign up a few little contracts for placing contracts, and I've plucked them and brought them to you." He broke into song: "Zillah, darling one, I plucked them and brang them to thou!" He broke into dance and whirled Bayard off his feet.

Bayard tried to be patient. "That is all very interesting, Clay, but take your delusions down to Bellevue, where they'll put you in the right cell. What can you or I do with ammunition contracts?"

"Accept 'em, you blamed ijit! Open up your old shut-up factory and get busy."

"We have no machinery for making ammunition."

"Get it then, or adapt your machinery! There are a thousand things to do, gun parts to make, breech-blocks, shell-cases, cartridges, triggers, magazine-clips, aeroplane engines, motors, motor-boats, spades, knives, bayonets, shrapnel—thousands of things. And they need millions of each article, for there are millions of men in the field using up what they've got so fast that it's only a matter of weeks before they'll be desperate."

Bayard began to see the scheme—also the obstacles. "But it takes money to make these things. Where will we get the cash for the pay-rolls and the raw materials?"

"From the banks! The banks are bursting open with idle money; it's rotting on their hands!"

"What security can we give?"

"The contracts, you nut! Contracts with the governments of England and France and Russia back of them. And Italy is getting ready to jump in; every market in

the country is going to feel the demand. Horses are being bought up by the herd, and shoes by the million pairs, and grain by the shipload—everything! Millions of American women have been knitting mufflers for nothing; now the manufacturers have got to tend to their knitting for money."

Bayard went aglow with the realization of the opportunity. He began to tremble at the vision of the sudden avalanches of wealth pouring down the bleak mountains of despair. He could hear the roar of the Niagaras of gold.

Daphne and Leila came rushing from concealment. Clay's beatitude was so complete that he forgot his resentments and kissed them both. Finding Daphne in his arms again, he groaned:

"I'm sorry I was such a dog the other night, darling. But I had just found the first gleam of hope and I was crazy to tell you, and I waited outside till I was almost dead. Then you came at last with Duane, and I forgot everything but my ugly temper. Forgive me."

"No, forgive me. I oughtn't to have gone with him, but I— Well, he offered to help you; and—" She was looking for some excuse that should not mar his bliss.

Clay flung his head high and answered: "Damn his charity! I don't need his help! I'll be able to buy and sell Duanes by the dozen before long."

Daphne laughed with ecstasy at his conceit. It had been so long since she had seen him reveal any emotion but craven humility or sick rage at ill luck. Bumptiousness was very becoming to him.

He dropped to a divan and made her sit alongside. Bayard beckoned Leila to her old throne on his knees.

Clay held forth like one returned from Golconda. He grew lyrical, Pindaric, with his celebration of the Olympic victory over poverty. They all laughed till their eyes were wet at the abrupt redemption from the hell of want.

Clay, the weakling, the improvident, the mournful,

the skulker, was Napoleon returned from Elba; hostile armies were flinging themselves at his feet; generals were embracing his knees, asking him to lead them, provision, accouter them. England, France, Russia were imploring him to save them and take their millions as tribute.

He had thought out everything. He knew the factory and its machinery, and he had sought expert advice on its adaptation to the needs of the occasion. He had not forgotten a legitimate selfishness. He had arranged commissions for himself in every direction. He had arranged for partial payments in advance. He had arranged that the final payments should be made when the wares were delivered at the American docks so that the risks of transfer across the submarine-infested ocean should not fall on the manufacturers. He had even made the stipulation that the moneys should be paid in American dollars, since he foresaw the panics in exchange rates that afterward threw the markets into temporary convulsions.

Daphne made a profound comment: "Opportunity knocks at every man's door, they say, and Clay didn't keep her waiting. Did you, honey?"

Clay answered with excusable modesty: "Knocked at my door, eh? She never came near my part of town. I went out and found her running down a side street, and I lassoed her and dragged her in. I've got her locked in my cellar and I've trained her to eat out of my hand."

"You're simply wonderful!" Daphne cried, and hugged him till he ouched. She was not jealous of Opportunity —yet.

Bayard was frantic to be at work. He resolved to telephone the president of his company at once and lay the matter before him. Leila cannily advised Bayard to grasp the whip-hand of the situation and keep it. He agreed that she was right, and promised her a commission on his commission.

She began to dance about the room like a Miriam celebrating the passage of the Red Sea,

"The first thing we'll do," she said, "will be to get my jewelry out of the pawnshop and the second will be to buy some more. And, oh, the dresses and the hats!"

This asserted a sobering effect on Bayard. "No," he announced. "We've gone through Hades once because I gambled away my reserves. This time I'm going to get a big reserve before I spend a cent. I'll never risk another ordeal like the one we've been through. I've learned my lesson. No more fractures of the Thirteenth for me!"

Leila laughed.

Bayard went to the telephone to start the wheels of the factory in motion by summoning the president to council. He paused to ask: "He'll want to know who the foreign agent is you are dealing with? Or are there several? Who shall I say?"

Clay answered: "All my contracts come through a queer sort of Englishman. He's out for Number One, and he insisted on his little private rake-off, but it's worth it if we get the contracts."

"What's his name?"

"You've got to keep it dark. He doesn't want it to be known. The foreign spies are watching him now. That's why he has me help him. That's why he pretends to be a mere butterfly."

"But I've got to know who he is," Bayard urged. "What the devil is his name?"

"Wetherell," said Clay.

CHAPTER LVII

THE great Skoda gun that suddenly one day dropped a monster shell in Dunkirk twenty miles off could hardly have caused more stupefaction than the name of Wetherell detonating in that room.

Daphne snatched her hand from Clay's. Bayard sprang up so sharply that he almost threw Leila forward on her face. Instinctively he caught her by the arm and saved her from falling. But instantly he flung her arm from him in a gush of disgust.

Clay gaped at the tableau in bewilderment. He had not dreamed that any of the three had ever heard of Wetherell. He could not imagine the bitterness the name involved.

Bayard tossed his clenched fists up in the air in a frenzy at the bad taste of fate's latest practical joke.

"Wouldn't that be my luck!" he groaned. "Wouldn't it be my rotten luck that this one chance should come to me with that string tied to it? And with that yellow dog tied to the string? And I let him get away! I didn't beat him up! I thought I hated him, but I didn't know how much I ought to hate him. Honestly, this is the funniest damned thing I ever heard of."

The strange sounds issuing from him were ambiguous between sobs and laughter. His face was contorted in an anguish of amusement.

Leila studied him with repugnance, as if he were a monstrosity dredged up from the deepest sea. Clay's mouth was still open and staring like a dull third eye. He asked, humbly:

"Will some kind friend please tell me what all the excitement is about?"

This was not so easy. Who wanted to tell Clay that Leila had just been accused of neglecting her husband and her own duties for the society of this very Wetherell? Leila herself was the one that told him. She told him bitterly, excoriating Bayard and Daphne as co-conspirators in the wreck of her reputation and Wetherell's.

Bayard was determined to throw up the whole deal and let the European nations take care of themselves.

Leila realized at once that they were all in grave danger of backsliding into the abyss of poverty. This was maddening so soon after such visions of wealth. She must conquer Bayard's wrath, and to do that she must first conquer her own. She won the victory over herself with a struggle, and then went to Bayard's side, pushed his elbows from his knees, and re-established herself there.

He turned his face from her, and she twisted it back and stared into it and made a grimace. He felt like a spoiled, pouting child, ashamed to be serious and ashamed to be duped into a smile.

"Look here, Bydie," Leila cooed and billed, "don't you think you've done enough? You've shown me that you don't trust me, and you've ordered Mr. Wetherell never to come near me again. Isn't that enough without beggaring us all for spite? What else is it but cheap, nasty spite?"

"It's a great deal more than spite," Bayard groaned. "Do you think I'll accept favors from a man who has been courting you and got caught at it? I'd rather starve!"

"Well, I wouldn't!" Leila averred. "And I'm not going to starve. And I'm not going to let you commit harikari on Wetherell's door-step, just to spite him. And I won't let you condemn me to this poverty life any more. If you don't accept these contracts I'll leave you. I'll go

to your president myself with the scheme. He'll see a way to accept it. He'll be mighty glad to start up his factory again, and several hundred idle workers will be mighty glad for a new chance at work, and so will their poor families. I tell you again, once for all, there was nothing wrong in Wetherell's behavior, absolutely nothing. It's outrageous that you should accuse me of such horrible things."

She was crying—crying very caressably, and she was close enough to topple over and sob into his neck. And, after all, he was human; a husband often is. In a moment he was embracing her and imploring her forgiveness. This surrender restored her to smiles and renewed her expectations of wealth.

A spectator to the tender scene could never have imagined that the graceful young woman was trying to persuade the clinging young man to manufacture shells and cannon for the foreign wars. But the scene was repeated with many variations innumerable times about the world; for in that amazing series of enormous transactions, women of all sorts—wives, mistresses, cocottes—played an incessant part. In hundreds of little apartments there were just such conspiracies cooking.

So Bayard was coerced into having his life saved by his enemy. It was one thing, however, to consent to deal with Wetherell, and another to devise a tolerable reconciliation.

"All you've got to do is to make up with him," said Leila, brightly.

Very dark was Bayard's tone. "All I've got to do is to say to this man I despise: 'I told you awhile ago that if you came near my wife I'd beat you up. Now I find that you have a job to give me; so please forget what I said, and come to see my wife as often as you will.'"

There was a loathsome phase to it. Bayard hated

nothing so much as having to eat his words. If he had only not spoken to Wetherell! If he had pretended to be blind! He was troubled with all the motives that restrain the complacent husband.

He told himself that he had not the slightest justification for his suspicion of Leila beyond the insolent theory that a wife who would go out riding with a man not her husband would ride on as far as the man liked. This was medieval cynicism, but he had yielded to it and acted on it.

The more he longed for the contracts that Wetherell controlled, the more his gorge rose at asking him for them.

Leila, the resourceful, seeing and appreciating the paralysis of his will, found a way round, as usual.

"I'll call on Mrs. T. J. B.," she said.

"Do you know her?" Clay exclaimed.

"Yes. Do you?" said Leila.

"Of course. She was the one who introduced me to Wetherell."

And now it was Daphne's turn to flash up with jealousy. "Where did you meet that awful creature?"

"How do you know she is awful?" Clay countered.

"Didn't I meet her and ride with her in Wetherell's car?"

"Good Lord! I didn't know you knew Wetherell. And when were you in his car?"

It seemed as if all the cats in the world were escaping from all the bags in the world and organizing a Kilkenny congress.

Daphne had to confess: "I've had no chance to tell you. The day I went motoring with Mr. Duane we were run into and Mr. Wetherell happened along and took us in his car as far as Yonkers."

"Only as far as Yonkers?" Clay broke in, with recrudescent suspicion. "Why not all the way to town? Duane wanted to be alone with you, I suppose."

"I suppose so!" Daphne answered, with a sigh of dis-

gust, scorning to explain that Wetherell had been bound in the opposite direction. "Anyway, Mrs. T. J. B.—your friend Mrs. T. J. B.—was in the car with Mr. Wetherell. So I met her. And since you are so suspicious you might explain where Mrs. T. J. B. was when you met her yourself?"

Clay answered with the helpless superiority of a born New-Yorker for an immigrant from any direction:

"I suppose she was leaning over my baby-carriage in Central Park. I was about the same age as her daughter, Pet Bettany. We haven't known each other very well, for I couldn't keep up with the rich gang, and she has hung on somehow. Well, in New Jersey the other day I met a man who spoke of war-munition contracts in the air, and he knew somebody who knew that Mrs. T. J. B. had a hand in them. It meant so much that I looked her up. And she confessed that she had this young English officer in tow and she was helping him—for a consideration. She welcomed me and offered me as many contracts as I could place—for old friendship's sake and a commission. The dear soul is getting commissions in all directions."

"What relation is she to Wetherell?"

"It's none of my business. I didn't ask her."

"Why?"

"I was afraid she might tell me."

This scandalous insinuation seemed to help Bayard somehow. He began with a queer look at Leila.

"Well, if that's her relation to Wetherell, I apologize to you, Leila."

Leila understood what he meant and it embittered her so that she taunted him: "Sometimes they have more than one."

Bayard turned scarlet. It was unpardonable for her to joke about her own reputation. He had not forgotten what he had implied against it, and he was in a snarl of discomforts.

The four sat in a quartet of discord until Clay looked

at his watch and said, "In the meanwhile the Allies are anxiously scanning the horizon, looking for our munitions."

"And my creditors are anxiously scanning their mail, looking for checks from my empty bank account."

"You can fill that bank account to overflowing if you'll only get busy," said Clay.

"Well," Bayard sighed, "beggars can't be choosers. If I'd saved my money I shouldn't have to take Wetherell's money."

Bayard called up the president of his company at the office. He was away. Bayard called up his house. He was at his country home. Bayard called up his country home. He was at his country club. Bayard called up his country club. He was at the golf-house. Bayard called up the golf-house. He was out on the course. Bayard had him paged on the links.

After a maddening delay Mr. Lispenard arrived at the telephone in the locker-room. He expected Bayard to ask for a loan, and he began with a tale of complete misery, including a story of bad luck in his shots and the smashing of a beloved brassy.

When at length he consented to listen, Bayard's oration made a huge success. Bayard began to smile to himself, to wink at the spectators, and finally to share in the apparent rapture of his distant ear-to-ear.

The end of the matter was that when Bayard left the telephone he was a new man. He had cunningly raised his chief's hopes to the highest degree, yet withheld the name of the English agent. He explained that he intended to take Leila's advice and use his knowledge as a lever for his own advancement, and Clay's.

So elated he was with his importance as the rescuer of his firm and the guardian of millions of dollars that he even forgave Wetherell. "I'm not going to let a little obstacle like six feet of Englishman keep me from being rich and powerful. Wetherell needs me as much as I need him, and I guess I told him all that was necessary

to square him for any ideas he may have had about my wife."

Leila's eyes hardened again, as if she did not quite like Bayard in this humor. But she was glad of any compromise he might make with his temper. He turned to her to say:

"You needn't call on any old Mrs. T. J. B., Leila. I'll take the blame for what I've done, and I'll meet Wetherell as man to man—at least, as business man to business man."

She liked him a trifle better for that. But Clay promised to save him from any embarrassment by closing the contracts for Bayard's firm without involving Bayard's name. Thus delicacy was again removed from its dangerous effect of sand in the gear-box.

Clay and Bayard sat down to make figures, and the talk grew too technical for the women to endure. After hearing the first music of Bayard and Clay chanting in hundreds of thousands of dollars, Daphne stole out unheeded and went up to her own room.

Mr. Chivvis was sitting by a window in mournful idleness. Mrs. Chivvis was stitching away at her embroidery. She was cheerful—for her. She told Daphne that she had found a market for her needlework; the prices were poor, but they were real. She advised Daphne to get to work with her.

Daphne had not the courage to say that her brother and her betrothed were about to become plutocrats. She said only that she was very tired. And there is no more exhausting drain on the nerves than their response to unexpected good news. It is more fatiguing than bad. She was surprised and shocked, too, to find how snobbish she was all of a sudden about the petty earnings of a Chivvis.

Daphne flung herself on her bed in her dark room and let her weary thoughts gambol. It was good to think of money. After the long drought, gold seemed to patter

through the ceiling like a rain in a yellow sunset. The coins almost audibly tinkled about her as about another Danaë. She put out her hands for cups to catch them as they fell.

There was no further temptation in Duane's money now. She was to have money in her own family. Her brother would be rich. Her lover would be rich.

Then a harsh thought—she was not really engaged to Clay. They had quarreled. He had hated her. He had expressed his distrust of her.

Still, Bayard would have money. He would take care of her. Of course he had his wife and his father and mother—perhaps Leila's father and mother would need help. But there would surely be enough to keep his sister. In fact, he would be so rich that Clay might well be proud to be related to him by marriage.

And then she groaned and wriggled. Here she was again—debating what man should support her! What man should give her glory! Where were her dreams of independence, of self-sustenance? She had planned to lift herself by her own Oxford ties, and she had only pulled out the bow-knots.

CHAPTER LVIII

IN those days the United States of America suddenly woke to the fact that they could pull themselves out of bankruptcy by helping the benighted states of Europe into it.

The long panic that preceded the war had been free from the old curse of private hoarding. It was the banks that hoarded. Their coffers ached with useless funds. The newly created system of national reserve banks centralized and mobilized the store. Then came the call to use the funds in the manufacture of battlewares and in speculation.

The stock exchanges, where a few brokers had long swapped stories of bad luck, became football fields. The discharged clerks were called back and set to work till they cried for mercy. The brokerage offices were kept open all night and Sunday to record the almost innumerable transfers of the business hours. In offices where partners had lately snoozed at noon, cots were put so that exhausted clerks might take brief naps at midnight. Meals were eaten at desks. The well-nigh forgotten million-share days became the habitual thing.

There were sudden geysers of fortune and sudden collapses of failure. As in bonanza times, many were ruined, while the few prospered. But Clay and Bayard seemed to touch nothing that did not turn to gold. Bayard had gained immense prestige with his firm because of the huge orders he brought in. He took all the power that was accorded and gasped for more. His most reckless audacities were rewarded with success. He rode a tidal

wave and swam with it so well that all his progress seemed to be due to his own power.

Clay rushed forward with even greater velocity. He refused to accept his old place in the office, though he was invited to take it with increased salary and authority. He felt that he could do better on his own. And he was free. He had no family to take his hours, his emotions, or his funds.

Bayard had a family, but it got few of his hours now. He was frantically busy; he took only occasional meals at the apartment, but he slept there except when his business called him out of town. He slept like a dead old man, too exhausted with other emotions to have zest for love or laughter.

While Bayard was accepting the moneys that the eager bankers thrust upon him, he had bethought him to borrow enough for his own living expenses on a more liberal scale. He ransomed Leila's jewels from captivity and bought her better as well. He showered the radiant Leila with a double handful of bills one evening. And once when he missed a theater party he had promised to enjoy with her, his peace-offering was a bouquet of greenbacks fresh culled from the mint. He blithely forgot the Thirteenth Commandment and excused his extravagances by pointing to his uncontrollable success.

He reduced the insolent butcher to groveling homage by paying all his bill at once. He astounded Dutilh with the solution of that old account, and with a cash payment for new gowns in celebration of his new glory. He did not forget his own people. He telegraphed his mother a thousand dollars and almost slew her with amazement. He telegraphed his father simply the price of a railroad ticket to New York, and a peremptory summons to take the first train East.

When Daphne heard this she had to sit down to keep from falling down. Bayard resuscitated her with a check

for a thousand dollars. It meant nothing more to her than abracadabra. The whole incredible alteration was a fairy-story to her. She made a faint attempt to refuse the gift, but Bayard forced it back into her palm and closed her fingers on it.

Gradually she understood that she was a millionairess to the extent of a whole thousand dollars. She began to weep deliciously. She felt so sorry for all she had been through and all the things these thousand guardian angels might have saved her from, that she almost hated them for arriving so late. But gradually the *ex post facto* grief was assuaged, and she placed herself at the head of her thousand angels and defied the world.

She repaid Bayard with kisses till she lost count, and embraces till they both lost breath. Then she borrowed from him enough cash to pay her moss-grown bill with the Chivvises.

Bayard took the amount from a bundle of bills as big and sweet as a jelly-roll.

Daphne could not wait for the elevator. She ran up several flights of stairs, scratched the door with her palsied latch-key, and flung herself into Mrs. Chivvis' arms and kissed her—even Mrs. Chivvis. Her apology was the money for the bill.

Mrs. Chivvis took it with a quivering hand and turned to her husband to say: "You see, dear, prayers are answered, after all." She regarded the money as a direct remittance from heaven, and Daphne as a specially credentialed white raven to deliver it. "You don't know what this means to us just now," she mumbled. "I'm so glad you never paid us before. Everything always turns out for the best."

Daphne did not think to tell her that the money was the direct result of the devil's bloody carnival in Europe. Instead, she flaunted before her the check bearing the heavenly legend commanding the Fifth Avenue Bank to "pay to Daphne Kip or order one thousand and no hun-

dredths dollars" on penalty of incurring the displeasure of "Bayard Kip."

Mrs. Chivvis handled the parchment with reverence, and permitted her husband to touch it. It might have been one of the golden leaves of the sacred Book of Mormon, and she a sealed wife of Brigham himself.

"What are you planning to do with all this?" she said at length.

"I don't know," said Daphne. "I'd frame it in place of my first fifty, but I think it's bad luck to frame checks. I'd send it home, but mamma has one just like it, and daddy is coming over to-morrow to get his. What would you suggest?"

"You were planning to go into business. Why not use this as capital?"

"Fine! What business ought I to start—banking? or battle-ship building? or what?"

"There's embroidery," said Mrs. Chivvis.

Daphne had to guffaw at that. There are breaking-strains beyond the tensile strength of the steeliest politeness. Daphne could not keep her face straight or her laughter smothered.

Mrs. Chivvis did not laugh. "I mean it," she urged; "think it over."

"All right, I'll think it over. But let's go to the theater somewhere together—not to a cheap movie, but to— How would you like to go to a grand opera? That's the most expensive thing open to the public to-night."

The Chivvises protested, but Daphne dragged them to the Metropolitan—after borrowing back enough of her money to pay for the tickets and the cabs.

CHAPTER LIX

THAT night Daphne slept with her thousand-dollar check under her pillow. It insured sweeter dreams than a piece of wedding-cake. She woke once or twice, however, with a start. She was afraid of burglars. At last there was something for them to steal from her. If they but knew, how they would gather about her!

But she felt for the check, and it was there. Finally she realized that it was payable only to her and she doubted if even a burglar could forge her signature. After that she snuggled deeper into her curls and slept on and on and on, till Mrs. Chivvis' thimble clacked on the door and Mrs. Chivvis' voice respectfully informed her wealthy young paying guest that her father was in her brother's apartment, having his breakfast.

Daphne came out of the bed with something like the effect of a screw-propeller breaking loose from its crank-shaft. She went into her clothes in a series of dives and into as few of them as she dared to assume for the elevator descent. She put on a long winter coat over that minimum and a boudoir cap over her frowsy hair.

The elevator-man was as much embarrassed as she was, but she reached Bayard's apartment without further spectation, and pounced on her father with all girlishness of welcome. She saw on his face that glow of trust he had worn in the faded photograph, and she thanked Heaven again that she was still what her father would wish her to be.

He could not know what temptations had gathered about her, and she was glad. She was glad that he would not know of her despairs and her adventures with Gerst.

Now that everybody was glorious with money, it was best of all that he had not known.

He was dazed enough with what Bayard had been telling him. He was tremulous with the change in the air. Bayard was no longer a desperate son begging alms of a helpless father. He was a young prince in golden armor, riding down a bannered street and tossing largess on either hand.

Daphne was invited to breakfast, and she made a picnic of it. Leila waited on the table. She had not got in a new maid. She was looking for a French couple to buttle and cook. Bayard was impatient to get to business. His office was waiting for him and he wanted to set his father to work.

Wesley Kip could hardly believe what he was hearing from this masterful director who had lately been a harried pauper.

Bayard was ordering his father to sign a number of munition contracts and telegraph to Cleveland to open his factory and reassemble his dispersed employees. Wesley protested that the Allies could have no possible use for Kip's Kalkulators.

"Of course not," Bayard roared. "You are to make war supplies. You've got machinery and skilled labor, and those are what the Allies can't find at home. There are a hundred parts to a rifle. They need millions of rifles. You could make firing-pins or sight-leaves or windage-screws or triggers or sleeve-locks or sear-springs or bolts—anything. The Allies are recruiting all the neutral world to help them whip Germany and Austria."

"But do you think it's legal for us to make munitions?" Wesley queried.

"Of course it is," Bayard thundered. "International law justifies it. Germany and Austria sold munitions to Spain when we were fighting her, and to England when she was fighting the Boers. Germany wanted the Boers to win, but she helped England whip 'em."

Wesley was still afraid of the temptation to get rich by making implements of slaughter. "But it seems kind of terrible for me at my time of life to set to work making things to kill people with—poor fellows I never saw, sons of sad old mothers and fathers, and husbands with children waitin' for 'em, and nice young fellows with nice young girls in love with 'em."

"I know," Bayard said, "it's all hideous. But it's life and history, and there's always been war and always will be."

"But we ought to be neutral, hadn't we?"

"No! there's no such thing as being neutral. To keep out is to help the other side. And think of this, dad: if neutral nations don't manufacture munitions in time of war, there's no hope of human liberty or of disarmament."

"That sounds kind of what the fellow called paradoxical."

"Yes, but it's the plain truth. Look here, dad, suppose a certain nation is land-hungry; it starts out to build up a huge army, it turns all its people into soldiers; takes two or three of the best years of every young man's life to keep him in barracks; it makes every man leave his business every year and go to maneuvers; it makes the man in uniform more sacred than the priest in his robes; lets him push the civilian off the sidewalk; it piles up immense amounts of guns and ammunition; makes all its railroads run where they are of the best military value; fits every car for use by the army; fits every private automobile or commercial truck for military use; fills the whole world with spies; bribes other people's soldiers to tell secrets; arranges its own business so that it can instantly adapt itself to a sudden war; arranges to take over the whole food-supply; arranges for a tremendous gold reserve—does everything that can be done to make ready to whip the whole universe.

"What can the other nations do? They've got to imitate that warlike nation and keep pace with it night

and day, and to the same extent, or when the war comes —they're gone, unless—unless they're able to go into the open market and buy what they need. Once you forbid neutrals to manufacture war supplies militarism becomes a necessity with everybody. The best way we can work for peace with honor is to make munitions as fast as we can. Don't you see, dad?"

Wesley was thrilled more perhaps by the ardor of his son than by his reason, but he answered, fervently, "I guess I do."

"Another thing," Bayard went on, "and the biggest reason of all, is this: We're mobilizing our own resources, learning what to do if trouble comes our way. I tell you, dad, it's your duty as an American patriot to jump into this business. And if you get rich incidentally, why, what's the harm? Your old factory will hum again; the rust on your machinery will glisten, and hundreds of half-starved employees will know what the full dinner-pail is once more."

"All right!" Wesley shouted. "I'm with you! We'll turn out Kip's Kattridges in place of Kip's Kalkulators. Three cheers for liberty and lucre!" He embraced Bayard and called him a good old scout.

Leila and Daphne laughed, and an aureole of wealth shone about them all.

"And now," said Bayard, "we'll go down and meet Mr. Clay Wimburn. He is one of our risingest young billionaires. He will show you what to do, and where to put your signature, and you can take the Lake Shore Limited home with your pockets bulging with gold. Some change from the last trip, eh dad?"

Wesley shook his head, as if he were one of the lost Babes in the Wood. The only familiar sound was the name of Clay Wimburn. That suggested something.

"Clay Wimburn? You don't tell me? And doing well, eh? I suppose this will hurry up the wedding now—eh, Daphne?"

He chuckled, and Daphne smiled and patted his back as one pats the backs of children who ask embarrassing questions. Daphne fancied that the wedding which had been postponed by poverty would be canceled altogether by too much riches.

Who was she that Clay Wimburn, the darling of fortune, should marry her? When they had first met and philandered he was hardly more than a clerk and she was a Clevelander of no importance.

Now he was the escort of Mrs. T. J. B. and the crony of Wetherell, he was the Mowgli of other social lionesses and of financial elephants. Clay and she had endured too much shabbiness together, they had quarreled, economized, lost mutual novelty; they had yawned together.

Now that Clay was accepted as the lost heir of success, he would seek for a new love in the new fields.

The proof of it was that Clay never mentioned marriage on the few occasions when he deigned to call on Daphne or met her by accident.

CHAPTER LX

IT has been divinely or otherwise arranged that every prosperity shall have its asperity. America had profoundly changed from a huddle of dazed and affrighted witnesses of carnage to a people so busy with its own concerns that it hardly cared how the war news ran.

The bulletin-boards lost their throngs. The chronicle of the German capture of half a dozen Russian cities made less impression than the earlier destruction of one of the fortresses of Liège. Many of the newspapers at last discontinued their bulletin-boards. People were unmoved by the loss of ten thousand men in a single day.

Charities were still wonderfully supported and there was bitter wrangling over the difficult and ambiguous loyalty of adopted citizens. The hyphenated Americans became a dangerous problem to themselves and the nation. The little word "hyphen" and its tiny symbol assumed an enormous significance.

But nothing availed to check the influx of war orders or the swollen flood of prosperity. New York, the first of the cities to feel the old hard times, was the first to respond to the new good times. It began to quiver with the spirit of the mining-camp or the oil-settlement when a great lode or a petroleum lake has been struck and when sudden wealth is dangled within reach of the humblest grubber.

Not all who clutched caught; not all who caught profited. There were bright Dead Sea apples that turned to dust and much gold that proved but crumpling tinsel. But there were multitudes of Midases whose ass's ears could not prevent their luck.

There were legends of impossible fortune; but fact was crazy enough. Along with this insanity of hope went an insanity of emotion. Men grew fanatic over their business and over their recreations.

Bayard and Clay were of those who would take no recreation lest some abrupt cataclysm should suck back into the earth these rivers of wealth.

"Make hay while the sun shines," Bayard would answer the protesting Leila. And he made hay while the moon shone, or the stars, or the electric lights in his office, or in the clubs, or on the trains—anywhere.

The novelty of being rich lost its savor with Leila, and the monotony of being neglected began to prey upon her damask soul. She and Daphne forgot their mutual grievances for their common grievance.

"That's the trouble with these husbands," Leila grumbled. "When they're in bad luck you can't lose 'em, and when they're in good you can't find 'em."

"It's the same with fiancés," said Daphne.

Daphne had the worse of it, for Leila began to wander again, leaving Daphne to the society of Mrs. Chivvis, who kept urging her to invest her dwindling thousand before it was gone. But in the environs of noisy riches the schemes of Mrs. Chivvis demanded such prolonged labor for such minute profit that Daphne remained cold.

Leila's excuses for being abroad, and her explanations when she came back, grew more and more unsatisfactory. Neither she nor Daphne could forget that it was Daphne's business to remember that she was Bayard's sister and, in a sense, his spy.

In her angrier revolts against Bayard's neglect Leila sometimes frankly confessed that she was seeing a good deal of Mrs. T. J. B. and of Wetherell. She was dancing nearly every night somewhere—and there were so many somewheres.

She was buying new costumes with her old recklessness,

and Bayard was glad to bribe her with gifts of cash or with hasty checks for bills that he hardly scanned. Above all things he wanted her to let him alone for a while, since big anxieties and hazards accompanied his big profits or hopes of them.

Daphne began to resent Clay's neglect morosely. The few attentions he paid her only insulted her; his mind was so far away and his heart was all for his business. He was dazzled by the fierce white light of success, and he spoke to Daphne in a kind of drowsy hypnosis. And he spoke incessantly of the details of his business, or his gamblings. He could not see how deaf she was to the very vulgar fractions of his speculations, or the mad arithmetic of his commissions. She yawned in his face when he grew eloquent on the dynamics of wealth, the higher philosophies of finance. And he never knew. He kissed her good-by as if he were kissing a government bond, safe and quiet and all his own.

Finally, of course, Duane came back. Daphne rebuffed him several times, but he grew more pathetic in his appeals, and she yielded at length, more in pity for him than for herself. She would not go motoring with him, however. The shock of that collision and the grazing of death or crippledom had destroyed the charm of the pastime.

She still lived with the Chivvises. They had been kind to her when she could not pay. She felt that it would be villainous to desert them at the first glimpse of ease. But the reactions of money were busy. The quarters she had dreaded to lose in adversity she dreaded to return to now. And she could not make up her mind where to go or what to do. Her womanly intuition, which had led her wrong so often, insisted none the less plausibly that this unnatural deluge of money could not go on forever, and that drought would follow flood in the ancient rhythm.

So she stayed on with the Chivvises. She received Duane in the Chivvises' living-room. He was entirely uncomfortable there, but she would not go out with him.

One day Mrs. Chivvis went marketing, and he knew that they were alone again. He lost no time in precipitating himself on Daphne's mercy.

"I want to apologize humbly, grovelingly, Miss Kip, for what I said to you that night in the car. I deserved to be battered up worse than I was. I told you that I loved you, and that was true and is. And I told you I wasn't a marrying man, and I wasn't; and I'll never be unless you'll marry me.

"You've simply infected my brain with misery for you. I love you so infernally much that I'd even marry you—if you'll have me. I'd go that far, honestly! In spite of all I know against matrimony, I'll jump into it, if you'll dive in with me."

She laughed at his peculiar flattery and shook her head.

He growled: "Oh, I know all about Wimburn. But he's married to somebody else."

"What!" Daphne gasped.

"He's wedded to his art, the fine art of getting rich. And the cub will do it. He's crazy drunk with the game, and he's got a run of luck that nothing will stop. He may go broke and he may shoot up until he out-Schwabs Morgan. But he's lost to you.

"You can see he doesn't need you. And I do. I'm dying for you, simply curling up and dying. I've got money enough for both of us, and it's fixed so I don't have to worry about it. You and I can talk and think of something else. Clay Wimburn is as anxious about money as a fish on land is about air. He can't stop gulping for it. But I'm not thinking of it, and you oughtn't to be. I'm gulping about you. I'm on your hook, and I wish you'd either throw me back in the water or kill me and eat me. Will you? Please? For the Lord's sake, eh?"

His extravagance made her smile; his adoration made her glow with pride; but his longing for her touched her heart again as before, only more deeply, since she no longer felt the restraint of a rival pity for Clay.

Clay did not need her now. Luck was his poodle-dog on a string, following him everywhere, and not often to Daphne's home.

She had learned from Clay's business talk why her mother had lost interest in her father's business talk. She had wondered if her own wedded life would have been of the same sort, if Clay would have become one of those husbands who bring their shop home with them and sell goods to their wives all evening.

Life with Duane offered every attraction, especially as she knew nothing of the life in his circle. She did not know what tediums a life of leisure might hold. She had the natural hankering to explore the smart realms and dwell on the plateau of aristocracy.

The last word Duane could have said was the one he proceeded to say: "Will you come to lunch with me to-morrow?"

"Certainly not."

"Oh, aren't we correct? But we are not to be alone. We are to be chaperoned with the greatest severity."

Daphne thought of Leila's duenna, Mrs. T. J. B. "Who is she?" she asked, with raillery.

Duane answered with a tender solemnity, "My mother."

Daphne had heard of Mrs. Duane, had seen her picture in the magazines, her white hair like an ermine royalty upon her beautiful head.

Duane went on: "I've told her how wonderful you are, and she doesn't believe me. I dared her to lunch with you. She accepted. I dare you to lunch with her. Will you?"

"I never take a dare," said Daphne, trying to keep from shrieking with joy at her flight upward on the social rocket. "Yes, of course! Certainly!"

"Till to-morrow then! good-by," said Duane, and squeezed her hand hard. And she responded with a pressure invigorated by her gratitude for a delicate attention.

CHAPTER LXI

ALL afternoon Daphne went singing. She was to meet the great, the ancient of birth, people whose grandfathers had had money and bequeathed it.

She had no mania for social advancement, yet she was not abnormally unwilling to meet the high-fashioned. She had known Duane, of course, for some time; but then aristocratic men make friends with women of all grades. There is no prestige for a woman in knowing a male swell. There may be a distinct loss of prestige in it. Prestige for women comes from the women they know. Now she was to know Mrs. Duane.

Daphne felt that she must not underdress the occasion. She must "show" Duane's mother!

This was her coming-in party. She went through her wardrobe, and it was hopeless. She had not a gown that would not condemn her to the contempt of the very waiters. She must break into that beautiful thousand-dollar bank account. She thought of Dutilh. He would have beautiful things, divine novelties. She went to him.

He hailed her with familiarity that shocked her. "Hello! Come to get that job? Well, I need you this very minute."

Daphne flushed. She hated to think that she had ever been poor and had asked for a job as a model. She answered a bit snappishly. "No, indeed! I've come to buy the prettiest frock you have. And I'll pay cash for it."

"My God!" Dutilh cried. "Have you gone wrong,

too?" The look of amazed horror on Daphne's face showed him that he had made a mistake. "Pardon *me!*" he exclaimed. "What's come over this town? There's no talking to 'em. They're paying bills and offering cash. They'll drive me out of business at this rate. Well, I'll sell you a gown, but I won't let you pay cash for it."

Daphne flushed again. She realized that she had been a trifle crass in flaunting her cash. It would be more swagger to start an account. And now she was in Dutilh's power. She made a last effort to impress him.

"I must have the gown at once, as I am lunching with Mrs. Barclay Duane to-morrow."

This did not seem to overpower Dutilh. He was studying Daphne between interlocked eyelashes. He walked round her as if she were a horse for sale. Daphne became burningly self-conscious.

"Want to see my teeth and my left fore foot?" she demanded.

Dutilh did not answer. He was placing her among imaginary colors and fabrics. At length he nodded. "I think I've got just the thing for you, my dear. You're lunching with Mrs. Duane, you said. I know just what she likes. If she doesn't rave over it, tell her I made it and she will."

He went away, and soon a gown was walked in, a gown that made Daphne almost swoon with satisfaction. It was the very textile of her soul woven and dyed. She hated the model who wore it for desecrating it with her embodiment. She could hardly wait to get into it herself. Once inside, it confirmed her dreams. The creature she saw in the mirror was just what she wanted to be. It took all her self-control to permit a few revisions. She could hardly bear to denude herself of that integument long enough to have some of the bastings affirmed. She went home in a swirl.

That night Bayard was detained by a meeting. Leila

had a dinner engagement out. When Daphne asked if it were with Wetherell, Leila drew down her eyelids like mysterious blinds.

The Chivvises went out, too. It was prayer-meeting night at their church. They had taken up their religion with new fervor since the war had answered their prayers for a little money.

Daphne was left alone. But she was not lonely after that absolute gown arrived.

She put it on and promenaded and posed and tried to look down over her shoulders. She was practising siren attitudes on an imaginary Duane, and experimenting for expressions to try on his mother. She would play *grande demoiselle* to that *grande dame*.

And then Clay Wimburn telephoned. In pique she was about to plead another engagement. But she felt that she would like to have him see her in that gown. She would like to tell him that she was lunching with a nobler and a better woman than his Mrs. T. J. B. So she had him up.

CHAPTER LXII

DAPHNE had known several Clay Wimburns since the first one came to Cleveland. She had hardly met the latest edition of him.

He was a very tired young man these days. Some people said his head was turned; but it was merely heavy. He was fatigued with power and the weight of success. He was a squire suddenly knighted and clamped in ponderous armor and sent into battle. He had wielded the two-handed sword and taken heavy blows on his skull-piece. He had fought long duels with money giants, and he was very, very tired. And yet he was tired with victory, and his sweat was profitable.

He had reason to be proud. He had brought wealth to Bayard and to Bayard's father, and to many people who had done him little kindnesses. He had made his janitor and his laundress comfortable for life. He had set the smoke to curling from long-empty chimneys. He had mobilized armies of laborers, and filled countless dinner-pails. Yet he had been, as any other general is, the prisoner of the army he led.

He had thought constantly of Daphne, and planned to spend a great deal of time with her—when he could get a little. But he had seemed to be able to capture anything he wanted except leisure. How could he devote an evening to sweethearting when he was implored to spend it at the Bankers' Club with a group of almost kneeling plutocrats?

If ever he had an evening free his fatigue would fall upon him like a thousand of brick and he would sleep

druggedly, sometimes on a club divan, sometimes at his own office with his shoes and collar on.

He had the market to watch as well. His first commissions he devoted to speculation. Bethlehem Steel had been as low as 18. Clay got aboard at 30 with a thousand dollars. He bought outright, and his twenty-three shares went on up and up, and down and up, till eventually they reached 459, when he became alarmed at their wild gyrations and sold them for fifteen thousand dollars.

With the second thousand dollars he bought on margin. He chose Electric Boat at 13, and pyramided as it rose. Eventually he "cleaned up" with a hundred thousand dollars. Some of his ventures lost him money in sums that would have crushed him with debt for years under his ordinary conditions. But now he smiled and forgot.

Other men grew richer than he; men of larger capital or better information heaped up millions. Men who guessed wrong were wrecked for life, or for a week, according to their souls. One unlucky acquaintance of Clay's had been advised to put his lifelong savings into selling Bethlehem Steel short—guided, perhaps, by a rumor that the factory was to be blown up, or stopped by a strike. He left town for a few days and his brokers could not find him. He returned to be told that his funds had been wiped out and in place of them he had a debt of ninety thousand dollars to carry while he watched others fatten on the stock that had been his poison.

These were times that made the "roaring forties" of the California gold fever look tame, as the battles in Europe made Gettysburg seem but a reconnoissance in force.

The most gorgeous color in the fabric of Clay's dreams was his future life with Daphne as Mrs. Wimburn. But he kept setting forward the day when he should lead her to the high peak of his wealth and tell her that all she saw or wished was hers. He kept enlarging the amount that should be enough. And this was from love of her.

While he seemed to be neglecting her, she was growing more precious in his esteem.

Sometimes in passing a jeweler's window he would blush to remember the little engagement-ring he had bought in Cleveland, and had had to return for lack of funds to complete the purchase. He would plan to recoup Daphne with a blinding substitute, and throw in a dog-collar of diamonds or a string of perfectly matched pearls for good measure.

He would enter the shop and price the mystic heap of fire-snow, and if it were twenty-five thousand dollars he would think it not quite enough, or a little too much, according to the prosperity of the day. Sometimes when the market was most headlong in its rush he would decide that it would be better to invest the cost of the gems in some stock. Sometimes he would actually "take a flyer" in Daphne's name. If he lost he pocketed the loss, and if he guessed right he would put the money aside. And so always on the point of renewing his troth, he never did. He was like a gold-miner who lingers for just one more nugget before he turns homeward. Sometimes that miner never does get home.

Clay had not told Bayard of his contracts till he had them nailed. So now he did not visit Daphne till he was secure. He wanted to astound her with the splendor of his tribute. When he met her he had kept silent about it, though often he could hardly keep from chuckling aloud at the sensation he was working up in secret.

Daphne's pride kept her from showing how hurt she was. She treated him with all the more gaiety, so that he should not suspect her dismay and her humiliation. And he, the golden fool, never noticed.

To-night, however, he came to her with his plans perfected. When she opened the door for him with a formal bow he did not notice her new dress nor her stately frigidity.

He caught her in his arms with such ardor that he

frightened her. He had grown something of a stranger. His clasp and his rudely proprietary kiss shocked her. He did not even notice that.

He began rhapsodically: "Well, honey, I've got somewhere at last. I made a killing to-day and I've brought home the bacon. I've got a couple of bank-books here, and when you see them you'll drop dead.

"If the good time had been a day later I think I'd have dropped dead myself. For I couldn't have stood any more work, and I couldn't have stayed away from you a minute longer. I had to stick to the job, though, till I won out. There hasn't been a day when I dast let go. And I didn't want to come to you while there was any chance of failure.

"Honey love, I'm a rich man and you're a rich lady. I've just put aside a big chunk for you. Time and time again I've stood in front of jewelers' windows and planned to buy you a bit of rock; but I said: 'No, not yet. Invest it for her.' And I did.

"I've kept account of what was yours and what it won, and now you can buy the gorgeousest trousseau that was ever troussed. And I want you to. And as soon as it's ready, I am. And there's the proof!"

He seized her hand in his and kissed it and slid something on her ring finger and held it before her eyes, and said: "How is that for high? Pretty bad, eh? If you don't like it you can exchange it for another."

Daphne looked down at her hand and saw the wonder of a huge diamond among a blur of lesser diamonds. It was as if a drop of dew, vast for a dewdrop, had formed upon her finger and a spider had fastened it there with a mesh of platinum gossamers. It was so beautiful that it brought diamonds to her own eyes.

She caught it in her other hand with a little gasp of awe. It was so big that it would have been vulgar if it had been more than a sublime distillation of water, living, shivering, light-splintering water.

Daphne could not speak, but Clay was garrulous.

"It's a little better than the old one, eh—the old one that I couldn't pay for? Golly! but times have changed! I had to return our first ring because I couldn't finish the two-hundred-dollar-payment. I tossed a two-thousand-dollar check across Tiffany's counter for that and never blinked. Excuse me. I didn't mean to put a price-tag on it; but I'm kind of crazy with joy.

"And now we're going to get married, aren't we? And no more foolishness about your waiting till you can buy your own trousseau, eh? It was sweet foolishness, but we won't have any more of it, will we?"

She felt another little stab, but not now of jewel-lust; now it was a stab of remorse. Clay had unwittingly recalled the old troop of ideals that had inspired her, and had given her pride to face the world and to fit herself to be her man's mate, instead of his plaything or his burden. But he was reveling on.

"The poor little thing! She has gone through so much, given up so much! She has lived in rags, in this miserable shack! And she went about hunting for jobs at six dollars a week! But that's all over. No more work for my Daphne. You'll sit on a cushion and sew a fine seam, and I'll feed you on strawberries, sugar, and cream. Eh? Isn't that so? Why don't you say Yes? Huh? Why don't you say Yes?"

Daphne was wretched in every thought. To quench his spirit in its ecstasy was odious. And yet it seemed more odious to accept his generosity and give nothing for it but greed. She wanted fiercely to bring her husband something more than an appetite and an expense.

To put away the little two-hundred-dollar diamond had not been easy. To put away the larger gem was ten times as hard. But what was she worth if she could resist a small bribe only to be bought with a big one; to be superior to gold, but inferior to platinum?

Clay was pacing the floor recounting his financial ad-

ventures with such eloquence that he did not realize how still she was, or how far away, or how busy her brain. When at last he reached the end of his peroration and turned to her for applause, he found her pretty features all askew; her eyes were crinkled and wet, and her chin crumpled, and her lips like a child's about to bawl.

She was dragging the stubborn ring from her finger and blubbering: "Take it back, please. I can't wear it. I just can't."

Clay came down to earth with such a thump as Icarus made when the wax melted from his wings. He stared at Daphne with neither understanding nor sympathy, set his jaw hard, put his palm forth, accepted the ring as a sort of ironical tip, tossed it up and caught it two or three times, shoved it in his pocket, yawned "Ho-hum," shoved his head into his hat, his arms into his overcoat, and let himself out in a silence that would have been perfect if the spring lock had not snapped with a vicious click.

CHAPTER LXIII

WHEN Tom Duane told Daphne that he had dared his mother to lunch with her, and his mother had accepted, he was not exactly a liar. His phrase, "I dared her to lunch with you," was a kind of typographical error for "I shall have dared, etc." He was simply mixing his tenses and expressing the future perfect in the preterit.

It was no cold-blooded and deliberate murder of the truth. It was a warm-blooded improvisation. He wanted to have Daphne to lunch, and, seeing that she was afraid to be alone with him in a crowd, he dragged his mother in as a delicate proof of his good intentions. And his intentions were thoroughly good now.

Having failed to succeed with bad intentions, he had turned traitor to evil and deserted to virtue. Anything to succeed in getting Daphne. His first problem was to find his mother; his second, to persuade her to play the part he had written for her. He spent several hours searching for her. She was always as busy as a popular débutante, though in some civilizations she would have been an old crone débuting into her second childhood.

Duane called at her home and found that she was out. Her old butler told him a dozen places she might be; she might be knitting scarfs for Belgian soldiers or studying skating, or attending a council of the state board of suffrage huntresses, or a Philharmonic concert, or an auction bridge, or a committee on relief for the Polish victims of the war.

Duane could not find her anywhere. While he was fol-

lowing a blind trail, she got into the house and out of her afternoon gown and into her night gown and out of the house again.

When Duane harked back to her home just too late the butler could not remember whether she had said she was going to "Götterdämmerung" or the "Follies of 1915," but he felt sure that he had over'eard her allude to going to "The Castles in the Air" afterward.

As a matter of fact, she had gone to a meeting of the Drama League at the MacDowell Club—a league devoted to the altruistic ideal of whipping in audiences to the worthier plays, which would naturally not draw them without outside help.

It was beyond midnight when Duane finally ran his mother to ground on the roof garden where she was having a joyous time. She was still breathing a little hard after a fox-trot with a fat railroad president, and they were watching a Russian dancer posture in minimized Greek costume under a very searching search-light. The dancer was blowing inaudible tunes on a gilded imitation of an ancient flute. She held it at some distance from her professional smile, but that made no difference, as the flute had no holes in it, anyway.

Duane regarded his venerable parent with tolerant amusement, then walking up to her, took her by as much of the lobe of her ear as was not occupied by a huge baroque pearl. He said:

"Come home, young woman, and all will be forgiven. You're too young for this sort of thing."

His mother slapped his hand away and said: "Hello, Tommy! Sit down till this creature gets tired, and have a fox-trot with your poor old mother."

"No, you don't!" Duane remonstrated. "You can't lead me into your evil ways. I've been hunting for you all over town, singing, 'Oh, Where is My Wandering Ma To-night?' And now I'll take you back while the light still burns in the window."

But she would not be redeemed till she had finished her highball and had a dance with her son.

"You know you dance disgracefully well, young woman," he said, as they skipped and gamboled.

"You don't have to flirt with me," she retorted.

At length she let him lead her to her humble limousine. She pushed the button that put out the ceiling lamp, and, taking up an electric cigar-lighter with an abestos glow, gave him fire for the cigarette she gave him and took one for herself from her case.

Her great-grandmother had smoked a pipe, and been accounted a senile, old, toothless dotard at Mrs. Duane's age (which—whisper—was sixty). Mrs. Duane was herself a great-grandmother, since her eldest daughter's eldest daughter had married and mothered at eighteen. When Duane said, "You're looking great to-night, mummsy," she sighed, "A great-grandmother!" Then she went on: "I've always been thankful to you, Tom, for not marrying and adding a gang of grandchildren to my troubles. You never had much sense about other things, but you've kept out of the clutches of women—and children. But what's on your mind?"

"I'm giving a luncheon to-morrow, and you're It."

"To-morrow! Not a chance!"

"You've got to be there."

"Sorry. I'm having some people in."

"Throw 'em out."

"Can't."

"Must."

"Not this time, honey! Besides, any luncheon you'd invite me to would be too tame for me to live through."

"Wait till you see her."

"Her? Oh Lord, Tom, you're not going to do anything rash, are you?"

"Whaddya mean, rash?"

"You'd never invite me to meet a girl unless you wanted me to look her over with a view to adoption."

"Well, maybe not. Better have a peek at her before it's too late. She's a pippin."

"Leave her in the basket, or leave me out of it."

"No, old girl, no! I need you in my business."

"What's her name? Do I know her?"

"Kip."

"Kip? Isn't that the name of the girl you rushed so hard a year ago?"

"No, that's the name of the feller she married. This is his sister."

"Funny kind of taste you have. Well, where does she come from? What is she?"

"From Cleveland. She's a little dream!"

"Oh, Tom, wake up!"

"This is serious."

"You were hit pretty hard by that other girl—Leila, wasn't it? She hit you pretty hard, didn't she?"

"Not half so hard as she hit Bayard Kip when he married her. He saved my life and lost his own."

"You were head over heels in love with her."

"Over heels, but not over head. I was just about chin deep. I've never fallen in deeper than my wisdom teeth till now."

"You thought that before. You'll think so when the next girl comes along."

"This girl's different. She's the real thing."

"We're all alike, Tom."

"Daphne Kip isn't alike. The rest of you are all grafters, pleasure-hunters, loafers."

"Thanks!"

"Oh, you!—you're the worst I ever saw. But Daphne wants to work."

"Great heavens, Tom, you haven't turned miser, have you? You have money enough to keep any woman better than she deserves."

"Yes, but—well, it's hard to put it the way I feel it;

but—you see, I don't believe I could ever love the average woman—at least, not marrying love."

"What are you afraid of in women?"

"The fact that they are women."

"You're afraid she wouldn't be faithful to you?"

"Lord, no!"

"That you couldn't be to her?"

"Oh, I'd play fair, all right. I think the vast majority of husbands are faithful. If they slip, it's only a stumble. The seventh is a much overrated commandment. I don't believe it causes a tenth of the wreckage it's credited with, and it doesn't usually get broken at all till after the real trouble has started. What I'm afraid of is the old money microbe. Most family quarrels are about cash. I can't endure a haggling match—and with a wife! Whew! If I married a woman and I found out she was just using me for a pocketbook, I'd throw my money in her face and quit her cold."

"Pick out one with a fortune of her own. Let me arrange the business part of it. There are just as nice girls with money as without."

"Undoubtedly, but I don't happen to want any of 'em. I've made my choice."

"Is this working-girl of yours to go on working after she's married?"

"Of course not. I don't begrudge her all I've got. I love to give, but I hate like the very old devil to be sponged on."

"But what makes you think that this girl won't settle down and graft like the rest of us?"

"Why, she has ideas. She was engaged to another feller, and she came East to buy her trousseau, and got so sick of taking her father's money that she vowed she'd not marry till she could pay for her own trousseau. That made Mr. Fiancé mad and they quarreled. Then I got her a job with Reben."

"Good Lord! an actress!"

"Not a bit of it. Reben said she couldn't act enough to keep herself warm. She was the most adorable failure that ever lived. Then she tried other jobs and I—I've seen quite a lot of her, and I'm daffy about her."

"And is she daffy about you?"

"No; that's the worst of it. She refused to lunch with me, so I invited you, and then she said she would."

"Very interesting," Mrs. Duane yawned. "I'm sorry I can't oblige you both."

"You can! You're going to."

"But I have people invited, important people."

"They can't be half as important to you as I am, and I need you. You never fell down yet when I needed you."

"You blarneyer! Well, I'll see."

Duane had learned from childhood that his mother's "I'll see" was always as good as her bond. So he helped her into the house and kissed her warmly and said:

"You're the best feller that ever was."

CHAPTER LXIV

THE next day Mrs. Duane was at Delmonico's, and on time. Daphne was not. She was late. Her taxicab had been caught in the cold molasses of Fifth Avenue traffic. Also the Dutilh costume had required a deal of study. Leila had helped her into it, and praised her for it. Leila had even reached the generous height of hoping that she might capture Tom Duane.

"Grab Tom Duane if you can," said Leila. "I was a fool not to take him myself. He has money, and always had it. Clay is just getting his. He's as crazy as Bayard. You'll always have to run second with Clay, as I do with Bayard. But with Duane you'll be first; or if you have a rival, it will be a woman and not a bank account. You can be jealous of something human. Go in and win."

Daphne, on the way down, had a curious feeling that Leila's liberality in presenting her with Duane was based on her interest in Wetherell. It was a hateful thought, but it stuck as it slid into her mind.

And, perversely, she liked Clay a little more and Duane a little less for Leila's dispraisal of the one and recommendation of the other. But she thought chiefly of Mrs. Duane. She could see by a public clock that she was already late, and the long halts of the taxicab as the mob of cars oozed down the Avenue drove her frantic.

At last the cab turned round the patient old gentleman who turned the "Go" and "Stop" semaphore at Forty-fourth Street. Daphne leaped from the cab, handed the driver the exact fare as a protest against his tardiness, and fled up the steps.

She found Duane seated on a divan with a brilliant, perfectly gowned woman whose fleecy-white hair was like a nun's coif about a very secular face.

Duane rushed forward to greet Daphne and present her. Mrs. Duane gave her a cordial hand-clasp, smiling at Daphne's panting apology:

"I'm unutterably ashamed to be so late. You'll never forgive me."

"I'm obliged to you for a little chat with my son. I don't often get as many words with him."

Daphne felt that she was in the presence of tact inspired by kindliness. Mrs. Duane had indeed been dealt with kindly by life and she passed the influence along.

As the two women studied each other in mutual anxiety Daphne felt that Mrs. Duane was one who had always worn good clothes, eaten excellent food well served, and sipped wines of the best vintages.

Mrs. Duane guessed Daphne as one who had most of life to learn, but approached it with eagerness to get the best of it, yet without a feeling that the world owed her its superlative luxuries and that anything less was robbery.

Mrs. Duane could be merciless in rebuffing those who tried to push into her society or demanded what they could not win by their personal charm. She could not see why a woman of social altitude should be called a snob because she did not open her heart to every outsider who claimed her time and attention. She kept a home, not a hotel. She asked no more than the smallest town's smallest woman asks: the privilege of choosing her own intimates. She exercised that privilege with a kind of shy sincerity that social strugglers misnamed conceit. The barriers she drew about herself were like the walls about her garden, meant only to keep priers and peerers from ruining the coziness within.

There is no more variety in the middle class or the farmer class than in the species labeled by the awkward

phrase "the New York society woman." People who do not know any or many of her seem to think she is all alike. But she includes every imaginable kind of soul from vicious youth and age to saintly youth and age. Some of the New York society women know more about farming than some of the farmer's wives. Mrs. Duane did. Some of them are hospitable, approachable, democratic, simple, sane—and some of them not. Generalization is prevarication. It is hardly safe to say more than that each of us likes what (s)he likes, dislikes what (s)he dislikes, and is more or less frank about it.

Mrs. Duane studied Miss Kip with almost more embarrassment than Daphne her, and with perhaps more fear; for if Daphne was on trial as a candidate for social promotion, Mrs. Duane was on trial as a mother-in-law.

Her mother eyes saw the adoration in her son's manner toward Daphne. She saw how he hung back to pilot Daphne through the tables in the wake of the head waiter. He quite neglected his mother. There was a symbol and an emphasis in this that did not escape Mrs. Duane. She took it with good sportsmanship. She even complimented her successful rival and told her son that he had not overpraised her.

The relations between her and her son were so comradely that Daphne was surprised. She was strangely touched to hear him call her "mother." It would be hard to say just what Daphne expected him to call her, or what reciprocal emotion she expected to find between them.

Her reading had doubtless given her a common impression that mother-love and filial piety are emotions too lowly for the upper classes—as if the details of doing one's own housework or having it done, or having one servant or two or a hundred, of spending one dollar or nine or a million, could work any vital alteration in the primeval instincts and inheritances of souls.

Duane, as usual, ordered the luncheon without asking his guests any questions. He was rich enough to order a

sensible meal. He was evidently not afraid even of the waiter.

Mrs. Duane was there on business. She was shopping for a daughter-in-law. Being a believer in getting her money's worth, she came soon to the point:

"My son tells me that you have ideas, Miss Kip. That rather scared me at first and I was afraid to meet you, for I haven't two ideas to my back. But now that I have seen how pretty you are and how well you dress—You won't mind my telling you so brutally, will you—an old woman has some privileges—"

"Oh, Mrs. Duane!"

Mrs. Duane understood the implied protest against the epithet "old," and it pleased her. But she went on: "Just what are your ideas? Tom has none of his own and can't translate other people's, so I wish you'd tell me yourself."

In spite of her flippancy Mrs. Duane was eager for her son to have a home and a good wife. His chances for happiness would perhaps be better if he selected a wife who would approach him and his people with a little awe from a step below. One who was not jaded by familiarity with the life and the set might find it more amusing, and might be more docile to its ritual, more eager to live up to it.

She was pleasantly impressed with Daphne's magnetism and the instinct for nice things and graceful ways that shone through the girl's evident terror. For Daphne was scared. Bayard's and her father's new-found money had helped her to dress her body in finery and her mind in security, but they could not give her traditions and cosmopolitan sophistication. She felt herself a foreigner talking to natives of a land that she knew only from the outside.

She knew, of course, when to use which fork, and all that, but she was entirely uncertain whether her opinions were quite the right thing to dip into the conversation.

She was further shaken by Mrs. Duane's direct question.

"Ideas?" she laughed, excitedly. "Why, I didn't know I had any. Mr. Duane must have been joking. He always is."

"I was telling mother about your theories of a woman's independence," Duane explained. "I mussed 'em all up. She was interested in knowing what they really are."

"Why, I have no theories," Daphne protested. "I just felt that a girl ought to be able to earn her own living and have a mind of her own. My father was pretty hard up awhile ago, and I—I suddenly realized how much of a burden I was to him. And my brother got married and I saw how bored his wife was when he had to be away from her, so I—well, I just thought a woman ought not to be dependent on some man for everything she eats and wears and thinks and does. That's all. And I struck out to try to make my own way. But I couldn't. I hadn't been taught how. And I thought every girl ought to be taught a trade—if you'll forgive the word."

She had read that the word "trade" was anathema to true aristocrats, and she wished she had not used it. But if it shocked Mrs. Duane she did not wince. In fact she smiled on Daphne with a certain deference.

"I agree with you entirely," she said. "I wish I had been taught a trade. Louis Sixteenth was a locksmith, and I think I should have liked to be a horse-breaker; but when I was young the world hadn't rolled around into the sun so far as it has now. So I've had nothing to do in my old age but alternate charity with dissipation. I don't know which bores me the most."

Then a stupid old bachelor ("Prissy" Atterbury, they called him) floated up to the table and unburdened himself of a cargo of small gossip. He had the ferocious mustaches of a dragon and the manners of a simpering spinster. There was no shaking him off till Mrs. Duane's time was up. Then he toddled away, leaving Tom Duane fuming.

"I'd have broken his fool jaw for him," he grumbled, "but a gentleman never strikes a lady except in self-defense."

Mrs. Duane said: "Prissy is a perfect example of your theory, Miss Kip, that every woman ought to have a business. Prissy has none on earth except other people's. Well, good-by; I must run. You must let me come to see you, or let Tom take us on a spree together. Fix up the date to suit yourself. Tom can always break any engagements I may have. Good-by. I do like you ever so much. We must be great friends. Good-by."

She left them at the table and would not let Tom escort her to the door. There was a silence when she had gone. It was hard to know just what to say. Daphne managed at last to sigh:

"What a darling she is!"

"Nice girl," said Duane. "She'd make a first-rate mother-in-law, don't you think?"

That was just what Daphne was thinking, but she dodged, "If any daughter-in-law could live up to her."

"You've made a smashing hit with her."

"It would be very different if she thought of me as a daughter-in-law."

"That's what she was thinking of. I told her how insane I am about you. She approves of you. Will you let me tell her you approve of her?"

This was terrifying—to settle one's destiny in Delmonico's! Daphne's heart beat faster than it beat that night on Riverside Drive when Duane's arm had lingered about her shoulders and he left his rain-coat there.

The same instinct of flight stirred her now. She was afraid of him. He mistook the quivering negative of her shaken head for a sign of scorn. It hurt him grievously.

He sighed as Clay Wimburn had sighed the night before when Daphne put aside his big diamond engagement-ring. His humility reminded her of Clay, and of her responsibilities to him.

She was dizzy with bewilderment while Duane paid the bill and the tip and took her to a taxicab. They rode to her home in silence, and when he said, "May I come up a minute?" she felt that she had repaid him so ill for his and his mother's hospitality that she could not begrudge him her time.

The Chivvises were both out, and she was a trifle uneasy at the emptiness of the flat. Duane openly rejoiced in it.

CHAPTER LXV

WITHOUT waiting to be invited, he urged Daphne into the parlor and said, with determination: "Look here, Miss Daphne Kip, I want to know the worst or the best here and now. I'm going dippy with hope and despair. If you're planning to throw me down, throw me down now, and I'll do my best to take my medicine. I love you. My mother likes you. She gave me the high sign. We both want you in our family. We'll both try to make you happy. You'll make us both happy. I'll be good to you and true to you and I'll worship you for ever and ever, amen. Don't turn me out into the cold world. I love you, little Daphne. I just love you to death!"

She stood trembling like an instrument he was playing a tune on, a love tune that she could not help vibrating to. When he folded his big arms about her it was as if he embraced a violoncello. She made no more resistance. Indeed, she tried to respond.

When he saw that she did not resist, a throe of rapture shot through him and he clenched his arms tighter about her. It seemed wonderful to her that she could thrill so splendid a man with such fire. She wondered still more that she felt no answering flame. Her arms were not stirred to enwrap him.

He bent his head and pressed a kiss on her cheek with unusual reverence. But her cheek did not take fire. Emboldened by her unresistance, he curiously turned her face with his cheek and set his lips against hers. She felt them tremble with ardor, and she tried to answer it as she felt its fervor demanded.

But she could not put love into her mouth. She could not requite his kiss. It was as if she were paralyzed. The contact with him was stupidity, like the contact with a man in a crowded car. She could not feel even so strongly as to feel annoyance.

Duane, however, was overwhelmed by her negative acceptance; by her failure to make even the playful opposition of coquetry. He took the absence of denial as a triumph.

"Daphne!" he gasped. "Does it mean that you are going to marry me? Does it? Tell me."

She answered, faintly, from her deep surprise at herself, "Won't you give me a little time to think it over?"

"Of course I will, you angel!" he cried. "I don't mean to scare you or hurry you. Take all the time you need. And so that you won't have any extra prejudice to overcome, I'll take myself out of your sight and hearing." He encircled her with his arms again and groaned in ecstasy: "Angel! My God, but I do adore you!" Then he took up his hat and stick and tiptoed out as from a church.

Daphne, left alone, dropped into a chair and took counsel with her soul, wondering at it and its perverseness.

She had been translated into the cloudy realm she had always looked up to. She had been offered a home up there where the enviable inhabitants dwell in a serene superiority to the money-diggers. She could put on the plumage of the demi-goddesses and be intimate with the elect.

If she married Clay she would have all her career to make. Clay and she had narrowly escaped from poverty to the next lowest grade of the new-rich. If she married Clay they would hunt a more or less expensive apartment and fill it with more or less costly furniture, all of it varnish-new. Their friends would be other strugglers of the same set—new-rich, or worse.

Clay would be working all day long every day and he

would worry about his work all through his leisure hours, just as Leila had said he would, just as Leila had learned that Bayard did and always would.

She understood for a moment now why Leila liked Wetherell—because such Englishmen knew what it was to take money for granted, and to use it as a means of comfort, not the be-all and end-all of existence.

Duane had come to love her. His mother had smiled on her and asked her to be friends with her. The great Duane and his greater mother! It was wonderful!

What was the matter with her that she did not respond to all that cordiality with as much or more? What ailed her that she could hear the humble prayer of Tom Duane and not fling her arms about him and thank him and Heaven for flattering her?

And yet she had stood like a numb wooden doll while he embraced her! She had asked for more time! She had given him a cold cheek for his lips; a dumb mouth and a numb heart!

Her eyes roved the shabby room he asked her to give up for the mansion he would take her to. Her lip curled in disgust at it—at the prim simplicity that made the best of its poverty, at the severity of arrangement that tried to give form to barrenness.

She saw the phonograph, the sole musical implement of that Spartan interior. She sniffed. Then she flushed. It brought back to her suddenly the memory of the evening when she and Clay Wimburn, jailbirds of poverty, had made a pitiful ball-room of the narrow place.

She flushed a deeper crimson, for she remembered the turbulence that had made chaos of her virtues in that dance. Her side ached with memory of Clay's arm about it. Her lips stung with the recollection of Clay's kisses. She was all shot through with a confusion of flames as she lived again through those wild moments when her blood answered his so fiercely that it overpowered and nearly damned her.

Clay had been potent enough to kindle her almost beyond his own power to quell her. He had sent her heart whirling as dizzily as a little red top, and filled her with terrible yearnings. He had made her blaze, while Duane had left her calm. Duane offered her velvet, and Wimburn fire. It was luxury from without against luxury from within.

That must mean something. She wondered what it meant. She was not so proud of her fire and her inflammability as she might well have been, but she had a wholesome instinct that the fire should be kept at home—or the home should be built about the fire.

She had been Clay's wife once in soul and desire. She had belonged to him as she could not belong to any one else. Did this not mean that she was wedded to Clay by fate and every obligation? Was it not a loathsome disloyalty even to debate a union with another man?

And now she shuddered again with disgust and she wondered again, but now she did not wonder why she had failed to prize Duane's embrace. She wondered how she had been low enough to endure it for an instant.

She groveled in remorse. She felt a need to go to Clay and make a confession, beg his absolution. She pondered this duty a long while with dread. It would be an odious humiliation. "And yet you belong to him, and you have been false to him," her conscience told her.

She lingered in this mire of self-abasement till abruptly she was rescued from it by a reaction of pride. Pride shot up in her dark soul like a rocket in the night and she cried to herself and the world:

"No, I don't belong to Clay Wimburn! or to Tom Duane! or to anybody! I belong to Me! to Me! My soul's my own and my body's my own and my life is my own. I'm not going to give 'em up to any man. I'm not going to marry anybody. All the men are disgusting, greedy pigs. They don't want to marry any woman, they only want to hire a wife—rent a plaything—some-

body to kiss and pet for a few hours a week. All the rest of the time she must take care of herself and fill her time the best she can. Well, I'm going to be an old maid and live my own life and pay my own way."

The change in her mood was as violent as if she had been drifting in a moonlit canoe and her lovers had rocked the boat and spilled her into icy water, and then fallen to fighting each other instead of helping her. She had to swim or drown.

CHAPTER LXVI

IT was on this mood that Mrs. Chivvis came in. She stared at Daphne, noted her excitement, and her solitude, and asked, with characteristic brilliance, "Well, well, you home?"

Daphne answered politely, if obviously, "Yes."

Since she could not explain further, Mrs. Chivvis explained her own affairs; and Daphne was so exhausted with the sultry problems of love that Mrs. Chivvis' business gossip was completely refreshing.

"I've been down to the Woman's Exchange," she said, "trying to sell some of my needlework. They were very nice about it, but it means a terrible amount of labor for a pittance of money. You have to pay them so much a year for the privilege of putting your things on sale there. Then they don't guarantee to return it in good condition, and they don't guarantee to sell it; or if they do they charge you twenty per cent. for their end of it.

"I couldn't see any profit in that, so I went to one of the jobbers. He said my style of work brought good prices in the big stores. But they won't pay him much and he'll pay me less.

"I was thinking— You know Mr. Chivvis says the reason women are so much worse paid than men is because women don't know how to market their services. Most business men, he says, are poor business men, too, but they're really all better than the best of business women —except actresses and authoresses and a few of that kind of 'esses.

"My mother used to spend half a day making lamp-

lighters out of old newspapers. My father came home one time when she was all tired out twisting the things. And I remember his saying, 'Abby'—her name was Abigail—'Abby,' he said, 'just how high do you value your time?' he said. And she said, 'How do you mean, Bije?'—his name was Abijah. And he said, 'Well, Abby, you've spent three hours makin' about a hundred lamplighters, and I can buy five hundred matches for five cents. So I calculate that you make about one cent every three hours, or four cents a day on a twelve-hour day.'

"You could have knocked her over with a feather. And after that if you wanted to get Ma mad you just had to say 'lamplighter.'"

"For Heaven's sake!" said Daphne, forgetting her own woes in the sorry picture of such spendthrift parsimony.

Mrs. Chivvis felt it apropos to bring out a cherished heirloom, a piece of age-yellow cloth in which three alphabets had been stitched by fingers long since as cold and white as the crochet-needles they had fenced with. The three alphabets, each in capitals and small letters, were elaborated with various conventionalized symbols between and an ornate border. And beneath was a stanza of highly discouraging verses:

> Our life is like a summer's day,
> It seems so quickly past.
> Youth is the morning bright and gay,
> And if 'tis spent in wisdom's way
> We meet old age without dismay,
> And death is sweet at last.

Daphne recognized the cloth as a "sampler," and a good one, but it hurt her to contemplate the patience it had required.

"Ugh!" she groaned. "I suppose the poor woman thought that she was spending her youth in wisdom's way when she was working on that, but I don't wonder she found death sweet. What awful piffle women have

wasted their energy on all through the ages! They haven't even made money at it."

"Do you think the money part of it makes it worth while?"

"You bet I do, for however you earn money, if you make a lot of it, you can buy things worth while with it. It's all right to do foolish things to get money, if you spend the money in wisdom's way. But when I see those silly old things our grandmothers fooled away their lives on I don't think they were as good as we pretend. And I don't think we're as bad as we pretend."

Daphne fingered the sampler with its crazy mosaic of thread squares. It had been everybody's religion to praise the sewing generation, and to uphold the eternal needle-wielders as themselves samplers to model life on. Yet while they were weaving these table-covers and chair-covers and trite wall-mottoes their sons and husbands were conquering the wilderness, carrying the flag from ocean to ocean, building cities, laying down railroads and aqueducts, inventing steam-engines and steamboats and telegraphs. The contrast was severe.

Mrs. Chivvis was a trifle shocked at Daphne's reception of her sampler, but she said in its defense:

"Well, even at that, there's money in these things and in all sorts of needle-things if you have a little capital."

"That's different again," said Daphne. "And I've got some capital now. Do you remember suggesting to me once that we might go into business together—you to furnish the brains and I the money?"

"Oh, I didn't put it that way!"

"Anyway, it's true. Well, would you?"

"Land's sakes! if you're a mind to furnish the money and the ideas and let me count the pennies, I'd like nothing better."

"Great! What could we go into?"

"What would you prefer?"

"Oh, any old business that will keep me busy and make a lot of money."

"My husband says that you can't make a lot of money without putting in a lot. That's one reason he has been kept down so. He never could get ahead. That was what we were saving up for—to get a little capital. And then the war came along—and we had to spend our savings. That same war has made your brother so rich that he could give you a small fortune. I don't believe you could do better than to put that into a business."

"Neither do I!" Daphne cried. "Let's!"

There was an unbelievable satisfaction in being a capitalist and discussing great business investments calmly. It was a new kind of game, more exciting than tennis or tango—more novel than love.

"What could we do best? We don't want to spend all our money at once. What businesses are there?"

She seized the morning paper and ransacked it as eagerly as if she were looking up the matinée advertisements. But she found nothing to her need.

While Mrs. Chivvis pondered, Daphne went to the window and looked down into Columbus Circle. She was as impatient as a newly snared bird. She could see several restaurants, dance-halls, beer-halls, Chinese chop-suey emporiums, and American quick milk-rooms, moving-picture resorts, cigar-stores, a florist's outside booth clinging to a saloon wall like an orchid on a rotten stump.

In such an environment the street-cars and taxicabs continued to eddy about the statue of Columbus, stuck up like a St. Simeon Stylites to witness the restlessness for which he was so largely to blame.

Daphne found no inspiration in the scene.

"There's nothing attractive down there," she sighed. "In England they have barmaids and in France cigar-maids, and in Germany the women are driving street-cars and taxicabs, but not for me, thank you. What are we going to do?"

"I like something with sewing in it," Mrs. Chivvis murmured.

"Flowers are nicer," said Daphne. "Last Sunday I was reading about a girl who came over here from Greece. A Spartan girl named Helen something or other, who is paying twelve thousand dollars a year rental for a flower-stand. That's better business than Helen of Troy was in, eh? Some change from the old-fashioned flower-girl, too, isn't it? How would you like flowers?"

"We-ll," Mrs. Chivvis mused, "flowers are nice. But they fade so fast. And you have to keep them half-frozen to sell them. I think I should prefer something with sewing in it."

"So I heard." Daphne smiled, but did not assent. "There's candy and there's tea—and toys; but—"

Daphne had really no specific ambitions, no call to glory, no mission for reformation, no poetic or dramatic yearnings, no overpowering desire to get her personality expressed or understood. She was not sure that she had a personality, and if she had she was not worried about its comprehension by herself or any one else. Her one big emotion was a desire to make her money make more money—as much as possible as soon as possible.

She dreamed with less constraint than Mrs. Chivvis, for Mrs. Chivvis was afraid of gorgeous things, lavish fabrics, high places, big figures. She wanted enough to live neatly on, and her idea of luxury was a bank account growing slowly and very surely.

Plain sewing would have suited Mrs. Chivvis, or humble dressmaking, or a notion-shop where one vended bright threads and needles and tape and hooks and eyes.

But Daphne liked her food enhanced with pepper and sugar and syrups and rich sauces. She wanted paprika on her life.

She thought a long while, running her memory up and down Fifth Avenue, peeping at windows and signs. She could not recall anything interesting as well as available.

At length she caught sight of the red telephone-book of classified industries, and, opening it, skimmed over the running heads of the pages, with occasional comments:

"Accountants—I don't know enough. Daddy does it by machinery. Art goods—I'm no good at art. Boots and shoes—brass—caterers—chocolate—cloaks—costuming — decorators — dressmakers — employment bureaus —fish — fur — glue — hats — hosiery — insurance — jewelry—ladies' clothing—ladies' hats—ladies' underwear —ladies' waists—lamp-shades—"

"Lamp-shades are nice," suggested Mrs. Chivvis. "You can sew—"

Daphne shook her head, and read on: "There's a lot of lawyers—literary agents—milliners—neckwear—nurses—petticoats—photographs—physicians— There are pages of physicians and lawyers—always lots of sick people and quarrelers. Rugs—pages of saloons—silk finishers—silk throwsters, whatever they are! Suspender manufacturers —tea—toilet preparations—translators—trunks—undertakers—upholsterers—vaudeville—vermin exterminators —weather-vanes (I could be one of those)—window-cleaners—wreckers and divers—yarn—yeast—and last of all are zinc spelters, whatever they are. Would you rather be a silk throwster or a zinc spelter?"

"I'd prefer something with sewing in it."

Daphne stared at the white, lean face taut with the meekness and the stubbornness of a martyr. She felt sorry a little, and mischievous much. It pleased her to shock that saint. So she said:

"All right, I'll agree to something with sewing in it—underwear!"

Mrs. Chivvis' natural pallor turned wanner, the hue that is called white on white. She saw the humor in Daphne's eyes, but she thought it hardly a joking matter. She simply had to protest:

"Oh, that wouldn't be nice at all."

"Not nice?" Daphne cried. "Why, the nicest people wear it. If they don't they're not nice."

Mrs. Chivvis was all aflutter. Her eyes involuntarily rolled round the corner to see if her husband were near.

Daphne howled her delight and seized and hugged Mrs. Chivvis with such vigor that she broke the ice completely and nearly a corset rib or two. She made Mrs. Chivvis ashamed and turned the white to a flush of pink and laughter.

"Oh, that's ever so much better!" Daphne shouted. "You don't know how becoming it is to you to blush. I'll have to say awful things to you often and get a little human color into you. But that's settled. I'm going into the lingerie business, or none. You can blush all the time you make it, and when you sell it you'll be a vision of beauty."

Mrs. Chivvis tried a last feeble argument. "But there's no great money in—in—those things."

"No money!" Daphne echoed. "Well, when you got your trousseau didn't you pay about a million dollars for yours?"

"My trousseau was very modest," Mrs. Chivvis mumbled, blenching at Daphne's sacrilege.

"I'll bet it was!" Daphne cried. "Well, anyway, when I started to buy my trousseau the prices for lingerie and négligée were simply appalling. And some of the things were worth the price. Beautiful? Umm, they were dreams! If we could open a little shop and sell exquisite things—"

"But—"

"Oh, it would be the modestest shop of all, for no men would ever come around."

This exerted a strong influence on Mrs. Chivvis' mind, and later on her husband's mind. At first he was horrified, rampant; he glared at his wife as if she were guilty already of shameless behavior; he asked her who she

thought he was, and what she thought he was. He could hardly have conducted himself with more violence if she had announced her determination to be a wire-dancer in tights, or a "classic" dancer in none.

Here again the contradictions of morality were manifest. The sacrosanctity of different portions of the human hide at different times is puzzling enough, but who shall justify the elaborately inconsistent regard for the various layers of garments—those which, as Daphne said, it is not nice either to mention or to omit?

Mr. Chivvis' grandmother would have made a decent pretense of fainting at a literary allusion to such things, yet she wore ruffled pantalettes that obtruded below the periphery of her voluminous petticoats.

But our day, for all its relics of prudery, is a trifle more sane. Secrets of every kind are held suspect. President Wilson, before he was President, had said that nowadays "everything must be exposed, brought to the light, published." He was thinking of political and business methods. But the spirit did not stop there and it revolutionized costume. It led women to wear short skirts and riding-breeches, and to bathe with men in clinging molds of themselves. It extended to the revelation of armpits in ball-rooms and bare legs on the stage and to the Grecian candor of young men running through the streets in next to nothing.

It led to titanic electric signs of underclothes for men and women, and the filling of the advertising pages and text pages of the magazines with images of both sexes in their penultimate raiment, their going-to-the-bath-room toilets of the most ingenious construction and mechanism. The unmentionables of yesterday became the proclamations of to-day.

And these things were as much in the genius of the day as the war in Europe or the inquisitiveness of the X-ray. And after all, why should we quail or apologize? Let truth prosper in every direction. It leaves the oppor-

tunities of virtue undiminished and it reduces the realm of hyprocrisy a little further.

None the less, Mrs. Esther Chivvis, whose soul was an heirloom from an earlier period, was frightened. The enterprise became an escapade. And she did not relish escapades.

Even the venturesome Daphne was a little exalted. She felt the tang of crime in the undertaking.

Soon that tang was gone, since wickedness loses its savor even more quickly than conformity. She decided that there was something rather tiresome in shock for shock's sake. There must be variety in the wares she would put on sale. She wandered among the shops for days, no longer wishing that she might buy things, but that she might sell them.

CHAPTER LXVII

THE market spirit smolders in women as in men. The air had reached it and quickened it in Daphne. The blood of countless merchants was in her veins. She did not know what "atavism" meant, but she was full of it.

Daphne was going to be independent, but she was still all woman when it came to the selection of her special trade. She would be a business woman, but she would do a woman's business.

There were ever so many dainties and exquisites that she wanted to hang in her shop. She was going to have a window! With her name on it! That would be more fun than a limousine with crest on door.

Gradually her scheme enlarged. She would devote her shop to the whole mechanism of the boudoir. "Boudoirwear" was a word that pleased her.

When she told Mrs. Chivvis the new trade term Mrs. Chivvis was almost ecstatic with relief. She had feared that she would have to sell unspeakables. She had felt hardly better than one of those unfortunate women whom poverty condemns to scrubbing floors of offices and worse —to carrying slops and washing odious things.

Now she was to be emancipated to a dealer in laces and silks. She could write to her people and tell them what she was doing without deprecation or evasion. Daphne was rhapsodically happy. She chanted, "We'll sell boudoir caps and peignoirs and couvre-pieds and mules and stockings and breakfast-jackets and bath-robes and cushions, handkerchiefs and handkerchief-bags, and sachet things and dressing-table accessories and perfumes and

—oh yes, I saw some exquisite embroidered bell-ropes. They're coming into style. Let's sell bell-ropes, and everything and everything.

"I'll tell you!—let's sell trousseaux!—all the duds a poor little distracted bride needs. I was nearly one myself and I know what the wretches suffer.

"And let's not charge 'em too much. The pitiful creatures have troubles enough without bankrupting everybody in advance.

"I remember how the price-tags put my romance on the blink. If it hadn't been for them I'd have been a nice old married lady by now."

She fell pensive over the memories revoked by the word "trousseau." She had come to New York to buy her own, and all her life had been changed thereby. People so rarely remain in New York to do what they come for.

Daphne had done nearly everything except buy her trousseau. Now she was going to sell trousseaux for other people and never have any of her own.

Her regrets, however, were soon forgotten in the multiplicity of her affairs. A shop must be found, rent paid in advance, fixtures installed, advertisements planned. Stock must be bought to sell.

It was in human nature that the partners should quarrel over a name for the baby before the baby was born. They spoke of themselves as "The Firm."

The problem was what to put on the window and the stationery. Mrs. Chivvis was for plain

KIP AND CHIVVIS

but Daphne felt that such dainty wares as they were going to vend needed a better bush.

There were hours of debate over a designation. They sewed while they wrangled. They were laying in what

stock they could in advance. Mrs. Chivvis, having been forced to give up the chaste dignity of "Kip and Chivvis," ran amuck and proposed "Daphne and Esther" or "Mlle. Daphne et Mme. Esther," even "Mesdames Kip et Chivvis." She thought she might give her name a French twist as "Chevaux." Daphne retorted that "Chemise" was nearer. Mrs. Chivvis sniffed.

Daphne proposed "The Chiffonier," but found that it had been pre-empted. Mrs. Chivvis suggested "The Bureau." She grew enthusiastic for "The Bureau Drawer." Daphne was reminded of Mr. Ken Hubbard's line in a newspaper: "Miss Fawn Lippincutt was confined to the house for three days last week by a swollen bureau drawer."

As people do when they hunt for titles, they reverted to chaos and argued excitedly for more and more intemperate fantasies—"The Wardrobe," "The Boudoir," "The Clothes Closet," "The Cedar Chest," "The Trousseau Shop," "Boudoiria," "The Lingerie-Mart," "Dainty Duds for Desperate Dames," "La Vie Intime," "La Stitch Intime," "Frills and Furbelows."

Finally Daphne, claiming the majority of the power, voted *en bloc* for "Boudoirwear," and claimed the victory. Mrs. Chivvis surrendered with the amendment that "Miss Kip" should be at one side, "Mrs. Chivvis" at the other. She bribed the assembly by promising that a cousin of hers, a young artist living in the Washington Mews, should paint a pretty signboard on a swinging shingle. After many designs had been composed and destroyed they agreed on this legend:

BOUDOIRWEAR

Everything for the Boudoir.
Exquisite Things for Brides.

MISS KIP MRS. CHIVVIS

The cousin painted it well and illuminated it with elaborate intials and an allegorical figure of a young lady in Cubist négligée. It had the traditional charm of a tavern board. In fact, their shop was to be a tavern for women in search of sartorial refreshment.

The next puzzle was to find a place to spread their shelves and hang the sign. Lengthy discussions ensued as to the individualities of streets and sides of streets and blocks and neighbors. Long walks were necessary, and interviews with real-estate brokers and landlords, landladies, and land agents.

Prices were appalling. Leases included the most ominous conditions. Places with the best attractions had the worst faults. Low rentals went with unfrequented regions. Situations where much traffic flowed past the door were so costly that they denied all hope of profit.

Daphne and Esther gradually increased the maximum price originally resolved upon. It seemed necessary to take a desperate plunge or give up all chance of success.

The thousand-dollar capital had gone dwindling rapidly under Daphne's living expenses and the expenses of exploration. When the prices of fixtures were added to the cost of the least possible stock plus the amount of the least practicable rent multiplied by the number of months that must elapse before the desired income could approach the assured outgo, the venture began to look like nothing but a laborious method of squandering money.

Still, their hearts were committed to the enterprise; and they settled at last upon an empty little shop in the late Thirties between Madison Avenue and Fifth. It cost only six hundred dollars a year to rent, but its floor space was only twelve by eighteen.

It was a moment of historical importance when the somewhat too-gallant real-estate agent offered them his fountain-pen and pointed to a blank space for their sig-

natures—he pointed with his little finger, because that one had a ring on it.

He accepted Daphne's check with a chivalrous bow, and the deed was done. He said he would drop round and see if he could be of any help. He was not encouraged.

The two merchant princesses walked out into the air full of repentance for their audacity and dread of the future.

Troubles mustered about them as weeds shove up in a garden faster than they can be plucked out. Expenses undreamed of materialized in swarms. Everything was delayed except the demands for their money. The petty-cash box, like a sort of perverted fairy purse, emptied itself as fast as it was filled.

The petty cash was the least of their dismay. The grand cash was the main problem. They had stitched their fingers full of holes and piled up reams of fabrics, but the total was pathetically tiny.

The shop was tiny, too, for a shop, but it seemed as big as Madison Square Garden when they compared its area with what stock they had made and could buy with the remnant of Daphne's capital.

One thing was instantly demonstrated. They must give up their plan or go into debt. Indeed, they already were in debt.

"We've got to take the plunge," said Daphne. "I'd rather die than go on paying a year's rent for an empty shop."

"I know," Mrs. Chivvis fretted, gnawing her thin lips, "but it's a risk. You'd better ask your brother."

"No!" Daphne stormed. "I'm going to win out on my own. Poor Bayard is too busy to be bothered with my troubles. He doesn't know I have any. And Leila is so busy with her social business that she never asks me what I'm up to.

"I drop into lunch or dinner once in a while and she

does all the talking about her own new clothes or the people she's met. Then she asks how I am, and I say, 'Oh, all right,' and that convinces her that I've told her all I know."

"But what are we to do?" Mrs. Chivvis wailed. "We can't go on with our stock, and you have no money left, and I hadn't any to start with."

"There's only one thing to do," Daphne answered, with a sphinxic solemnity. "Buy on credit."

"But who'll give us credit?"

"If you could know the number of people who have offered to give me all the time I want!"

"Oh, Daphne!" Mrs. Chivvis gasped.

But Daphne caught her up: "You're another! They were homely old men."

"That only makes it worse. When I remember the manner of that real-estate wretch it makes my blood boil."

"Your blood will never boil, Esther," Daphne laughed. "And neither will mine for any of these tradesmen. It was strictly trade."

"But what motive could they have, except—"

"Why, they wanted to sell goods. They told me that I must have a good stock, and that I was sure to succeed, because to-day is Lady's Day in business. Just look at the success we're having."

"We?"

"We women. And it's a case of nothing venture, nothing gain; nothing purchase, nothing sell; nothing borrow, nothing pay. The only way to get out of debt is to go in deeper—like getting a fish-hook out of your thumb."

Mrs. Chivvis suffered herself to be persuaded. They visited the wholesalers and the jobbers and were well received, having paid cash before—and, thanks to Mr. Chivvis' suggestion, having been astute enough to demand discount for cash.

And now the motor-trucks and the delivery-wagons and the cycle-cars and the messenger-boys began to pour stock into the little shop. It was pleasant not to have to pay for things, though the tips were reaching alarming proportions, and the bundle of bills for future settlement grew and grew.

Mrs. Chivvis made a list of their debts and tried to show it to Daphne, but she stopped her eyes and ears and forbade any discussion that would quench her spirit.

She had yielded to the kind of seduction in which the business world abounds. Girls and women are led to ruin by whispered promises of marriage and by the bright hypnotic lights of diamonds. Business men are seduced by the murmur of "Thirty days—ninety days—all the time you want."

The same murmur is easier still when it is cooed into the ear of a woman anxious to be a business woman. Daphne had listened to it.

But, after all, her intentions were honorable and others who had succeeded had followed the same path. As the world is run to-day, there was no other method to adopt. She felt as the other women felt who scorned the oldest profession in the world and sought their livelihood from the newest. They were escaping pretty slaveries, voluntary or involuntary. They were taking pride in trade and in selling other wares than themselves. They were setting their names on plate-glass windows and in flaring advertisements in the newspapers, rather than tamely surrender their names and their identities to anonymous dependence on men.

All over the earth they shone: Countess So-and-So, Lady This-hyphen-That, Les Sœurs Telle et Telle, Hetty and Elsie, and Mary Elizabeth, Ida and Alice and Maude and Anne, widows—weed and grass, old maids and young, wives and fiancées, women of every character and origin, were invading business; pretty Huns, silken Vandals,

buxom Goths moving upon the old citadels of masculine civilization.

In New York City alone there were over six hundred thousand women earning wages. In the United States six million. And the quality of their work had risen with like rapidity. Half a century before only one per cent. of women wage-earners were in occupations as good as clerical. In 1915 there were fourteen per cent. They could not all marry, for there were forty thousand more women than men in New York, and in some other cities the disproportion was more fatal.

Yet they were not wrecking the homes, for while divorce had increased one-tenth of one per cent., marriage had increased two per cent., and child-bearing two per cent. How could the home be less sacred or less popular because the wives were ambitious and busy? They might wait longer to marry, but they would not be denied the blessings of the hearth or its modern substitute the domestic radiator.

And what boots it to applaud or bewail it? It is a convulsion of nature. As well scold Europe for going to war. The fact is it went to war, and who was to stop it? Wise people are those who accept the tide or the earthquake and devote themselves to profiting by it or escaping it, not to denouncing it.

CHAPTER LXVIII

DAPHNE was troubled about many things, but after all her troubles were not the corrosive, morbid anguishes of love in idleness; not the parasitic mental diseases of a dependent on a man's favor or temper or honor; not the petty worries of a soul whose parish is a kitchen, a nursery, and an infrequently visited parlor, and whose time-table is the off-hours of a man.

She was trying to earn what she should spend rather than kiss or quarrel it out of a father, a lover, or a husband. She was fighting for and against things and conditions and dollars and competitors; inventing a market and devising ways and means to control it. It was brain-racking, but it was better than heart-racking.

In the swirl of her tasks she almost forgot Clay Wimburn. She was too busy to care much. She had no time to mourn. Clay was only one among a myriad regrets, and his affairs could wait. Her business needs could not.

She had barely managed to dispose of Tom Duane's bid for her hand. When she got round to it she composed a note in the least commercial of styles. Business woman though she was, she could not withhold her emphases or her underlinings. She wrote:

DEAR MR. DUANE,—You paid me a wonderful compliment and I am awfully grateful for it, but I am— Well, I don't know just what to say. Your mother was a darling and I felt oh, so honored by her beautiful hospitality, and she is such a beautiful woman, but—oh, please understand me!—I just can't make my heart obey my brain. One or the other is too small, or both.

But I do like you more than you will believe—too much, in fact, to take advantage of your good impulses. You will find somebody else far more attractive than me, but I hope you won't forget how much I wish to be

Your very sincere friend,

DAPHNE KIP.

Thus Daphne jilted Duane. He was shocked numb, for his hopes had gone soaring. His mother was mortally insulted, though she tried to make light of it.

"I'm jilted, too," she laughed. "If she hadn't seen me she might have accepted you."

But after the first bitterness they both realized that Daphne was at least not to be had for the mere asking. Duane loved her better than ever when he recovered from the first collapse. He was more determined than ever to win her.

He had no rivalry from Clay, for Clay did not come near her. He spent a lot of money trying to get her off his mind. He got a good deal on his conscience, but not Daphne off his mind. He longed for her especially, too, because there came a sudden disaster to his schemes. He was not so rich as he had been. Indeed, he could not be sure that he was rich at all. Any day might smother him with bankruptcy. This fear kept him from Daphne, too.

The bouncing munition stocks that were known as "war babies" had abruptly fallen into a decline. The submarine that torpedoed the *Lusitania* shattered Wall Street's joy, threw the dread of war into the United States, and set every one to questioning the problem of revenge and its cost.

The slump in the market came at the most unfortunate moment for Bayard and Clay. Any moment of slump, indeed, would have come most untimely, for their success depended on their success.

In his bewilderment Clay bethought him of markets further west, and he set out on a tour of factories in

Cleveland, Detroit, and Chicago. In Cleveland his thoughts were dour, for there was where his romance had blossomed in such pink flowers with such acritude of fruit.

He saw Daphne's father and mother float by in a big touring-gondola. They were sitting up importantly behind a chauffeur of their own. Clay felt like stopping them to remind them that they owed the car and all their prosperity to him. But he lacked the vicious courage.

In a tenderer humor he was impelled to run after the car and ask how Daphne was and send her his love; but he lacked that courage, too.

He left Cleveland and went on to Detroit, where there was no one to tell him that Daphne had turned Duane away and was trying to be a business man.

And there was no one to tell him that Bayard was looking for him in frantic eagerness to borrow money from him.

CHAPTER LXIX

"KIP AND CHIVVIS" were making a picnic-ground of the shop. Behind the soap-veiled windows they laughed and debated on arrangements and price-tags and show-cards. There was rapture in seeing the janitor nail up the pretty signboard, and watching the letter-artist with the mall-stick sit in the window and paint their names delicately in gold-leaf.

Mr. Chivvis, still out of a job, acted as maid of all work and stevedore, and grew so useful that they had to put him out. And at last the moment arrived when they declared the shop open, "raised the curtain," as Daphne said.

She waited with a stage-fright she had not felt in Reben's theater. There was no lack of temperament in her manner now. But there was no audience, either.

On the first forenoon not one human being crossed the threshold. In the afternoon a short-sighted woman looking for a pet-dog store drifted in by mistake, and seemed to blame Daphne and Mrs. Chivvis for setting their shop on the spot where she expected to find the canine palace. Also a girl entered to inquire her way to a rival establishment, and a blouzy female rolled in, sat down, and tried to buy a drink and take a much-needed nap on the premises. Their first customer had to be ejected diplomatically.

At night Kip and Chivvis locked their doors and went home, discouraged beyond words and dismally weary in the legs, also in the smile-muscles which had been kept at an expectant tension all day long.

On the second day the place was more frequented. A number of men with things to sell broke in. Some of them attempted flirtations with an impudence that even Mrs. Chivvis could not congeal.

Two women actually entered with intent to purchase. They ransacked the limited stock without finding anything just to their liking. They declined to have anything made or sent for. They said they would look "elsewhere" and come back later. The partners learned that those who would "come back later" never came back. Elsewhere became a word of hateful meaning, a gloomy realm from whose bourne no customer returned.

The partners began to abhor "womanliness" as it is revealed in "just looking round" and in shopping for the fun of it, and in garrulous discussions over colors and shades and matchings and cuttings. Daphne saw herself now as she had once been, an aisle-rover, a waster of salesfolks' wages and nerves, a vagrant without visible means of support, the means of support being some invisible man, old or young, at work elsewhere.

Daphne became a woman-hater, at least of the Womanly Woman. She wanted to scream and scratch at some of the loafers who took her time and paid nothing for it, who treated her with condescension because she was trying to make her money honorably instead of womanishly.

She began to understand why shop-girls are impudent as a class and why they grow absent-minded and contemptuous and deaf and indifferent. She knew what it was to wrestle with a temptation to reach across her counter and tear a double handful of fuzz from the slender skulls of some of her annoyers. She could hardly keep from ordering them out of the shop, or snatching the goods they fumbled with from their lazy hands and refusing to sell them at all.

Occasional purchases were made, but unimportant. Kip and Chivvis tried to learn what interested people and

what did not. They realized that they had far too much of certain things and far too little of others. They attempted to sell the deadwood by marking it down; but it would not move. They learned that, in fashions especially, people want what they want and would rather pay double for it, than take what they are not taking at half its cost.

"What do the women care for prices?" Daphne railed. "They are spending some man's money, anyway. They pretend that it's to please him, but they know and we know that it's because they hate each other."

The wares that sold best were the things of their own make, things sewn with personality. But Kip and Chivvis were too tired to renew their own toil at night. They put exorbitant prices on the remnant of their handiwork. And that made it sell better.

One day a great lady who could hardly squeeze through the door creaked into the shop and spilled herself into a startled little chair like a load of coal. She fanned herself with her fineries, as if pleading for breath, and groaned miserably. Daphne felt that she was about to die on their hands or ask for an ambulance, but she asked instead for an embroidered breakfast-gown from the window.

Mrs. Chivvis fetched it and the old ogress clutched it from her, holding it up to her nose as if to sniff it, but really to see it.

"That's it! That's what I've been looking for!" she wheezed. "Have you got much of this sort of thing?"

Mrs. Chivvis was about to confess the cold truth that they had next to none. Daphne intervened with saleswomanly enthusiasm: "Oh yes. It's a *spécialité de la maison*."

She thought the old lady would like a little French, and she received a couple of twinkling sparkles from the wrinkles and a sigh of sepulchral relief.

"Agh, that's good! My daughter is marrying in some

haste—a young imbecile who's going over to France to run a motor-ambulance. I'm Mrs. Romilly."

Mrs. Chivvis waited unperturbed for further identification. Daphne had never heard of Mrs. Romilly, either, but she gasped as if she had been saying her prayers at the shrine of Romilly from childhood and now had been visited by the patron saint, whom she had recognized at once, of course.

"Oh yes, of course. I think I read something of the engagement," she said. That was a bad guess.

"No—you didn't. At least I think not. Anyway, I've got to get the wretch as much of a trousseau as I can sling together in a few days. Paris is rather quiet, and she won't need many outer clothes, but—er—underthings, you know."

"Oh yes, indeed," Daphne panted. She threw Mrs. Chivvis a glance that said, "You remember what I told you about nice people wearing them."

Mrs. Romilly was choughing on: "I've been to several shops, and I was almost in despair until I saw your sign. If you could do a few things in rather a hurry I fancy I could give you a large-ish order. And if the things were at all successful, I could throw quite a little trade your way. You're rather new, aren't you?"

Daphne noted that she had a habit of diminishing all her adjectives. She hoped she would not diminish her prices. She assented that the firm was quite new. She brought forward an order-pad and stood at attention. Mrs. Chivvis was trying to signal to Daphne that the whole thing was wildly impossible, but fortunately a young woman came in and occupied twenty minutes of Mrs. Chivvis' time discussing a problem in Cubist colors.

Mrs. Romilly had trousseaued a large family of children and several poor relations. She knew what she wanted and what she ought to pay for it and when it should be done. Daphne took down her orders as if the little room

were the mere vestibule to an enormous sweatshop where hundreds of sempsters would seize the job and complete it in a jiffy.

Mrs. Romilly finished her wholesale order before Mrs. Chivvis' shopper had decided to look Elsewhere and come back later. She wheezed out like a grand old automobile of an early model.

When they were alone the partners gazed at Daphne's list and then at each other.

"What on earth made you take it?" Mrs. Chivvis exclaimed. "You know we can't fill it."

"Can't is a word that no true business lady will use. We're going to fill it."

"But how?"

"Darned if I know, but— Well, we'll have to get a lot of sewing-women in and sit up nights."

"But the material. We can't buy those things on credit."

"Then I'll borrow cash and pay for it."

"Borrow where? You said you wouldn't trouble your brother."

"I'm not responsible for what I have said or may say. Besides, I don't mind going to Bayard, now that I can go with success. I'll call on him in a business way and offer him interest and all that. I guess Mrs. Romilly's name is good enough collateral."

"But who is she? Where does she live?"

"I forgot to ask her. Look in the telephone-book."

Mrs. Chivvis clawed the pages, and reported, "She's not here," as if that finished her.

But Daphne brightened: "Then she must be a big bug. The best of them are not listed."

"But she ought to have a husband or something."

"Maybe he's too rich to work."

"But—"

"Anyway, Bayard will know. He knows all the important men in New York. And Leila knows all the

women. I think I'll run right down now and lunch with him."

She pinned a coquettish hat to her uncommercial poll, thrust her arms into her graceful jacket, and sped toward the subway, looking like anything imaginable but a business person seeking funds for a large contract.

CHAPTER LXX

ALL unconscious of Daphne's affairs, Bayard was approaching his office with the brisk manner of a triumphant capitalist. But that was bluff for outward effect. He was actually dizzy with loss of bearings and control.

Bayard had carried heavier burdens than Clay, and under the sting of Leila's whip had taken greater risks for higher prizes.

. When the abrupt depression in the upward swing of prosperity jolted him out of his seat he was nauseated with remorse at his repetition of his old mistake. The reserve he had vowed he would build up had been put off and put off from to-morrow to the morrow of to-morrow.

Fortune had forgiven him his earlier prodigalities and taken him back into her favor. But he had scattered his gains once more and now she would none of him.

He had not told Leila of his anxieties. She had lost the privilege of hearing his anxieties. He bluffed even her.

They were living now in a state of armed neutrality. Yet he was less willing to alarm her than if they had been on their old terms. Of nights he lay awake for hours at her side, not daring to move lest he waken her, not daring to groan or stretch out his arms appealingly to the dreadful gloom that was crowded with menaces. There are no tragedies or nightmares more terrible than those a business man endures in his sleepless nights.

Bayard knew that Leila was gadding about and reveling in gaieties, spending a fortune in new costumes, and finding herself with less and less sufficing clothes the more

she bought. He was afraid to add to his exhausted soul the burden of worrying over his wife's conduct or to heed his jealousy when it whispered to him that she was on far too friendly terms with Wetherell.

Even to mention his suspicions of the man would obligate him to smash Wetherell with his fists or kill him. And he dared not have a breach with Wetherell now, because Wetherell with his pockets full of contracts was Bayard's final hope.

Wetherell might cancel some of the agreements already entered into or delay the payments. Delay would be as terrible almost as complete default, for Bayard had drawn some of his commissions in advance from his own firm, and used them as collateral for loans at the bank.

The crash in the Street had found him so extended that he could not recover without additional help. That very morning one of his brokers had called on him for a renewal of margins. He had to have five thousand dollars or he would lose fifty.

All of his friends were on the same hunt. Those who had not speculated were carrying heavy factory charges for which they could not be reimbursed for months ahead. Wiseacres had said that this whole prosperity was only an artificial hysteria and that America would have to share the financial woes of Europe.

Rebuffed from every door, Bayard had gone to Wetherell's office—a mysterious sort of place surrounded by guards and secret-service men to ward off the menace of spies, real and imaginary.

Bayard had unusual difficulty in passing the lines. The reason he soon learned. A new man was in charge in Wetherell's place, a retired British officer whose natural and affected gruffness was aggravated by the unpleasant nature of his tasks. He had only one eye. Over the other he wore a frosted monocle, and his glare had the look of a revolver muzzle.

He made Bayard describe who and what he was and

what he wanted. Only Bayard's desperation gave him strength to ask this old Cyclops for an advance on new contracts.

Colonel Marchmont's nostrils shivered like a horse's as he snorted: "New contracts? New contracts? God bless me, man, we're going to cancel the old! The man Wetherell is a rascal, sir, a confounded sharper. We'd expose him and prosecute him if it were not for the joy it would give the Germans. If we can get him home we'll quietly shoot him for the dog he is. He took commissions on all sides—treasonable it was of him, with England in such need! And he has passed over to us cargoes of rotten Yankee goods that had to be condemned out of hand. We've taken away his license to deal in munitions, and he's liable for contravention of the defense of the realm regulations. And some of the people who signed contracts with him may be prosecuted in this country."

Bayard blazed at this: "My factory is as honorable as the Bank of England. We guarantee our goods. We welcome any investigation."

"Perhaps, perhaps. That remains to be seen. But at the present we're holding up all payments, all shipments, all orders. Is that quite clear? If you have any information to give as to the crookedness of this bounder, we'd welcome it, but that is all we can consider for the present. Good day, sir."

Bayard went away in a stupor. He had intelligence enough to feel that he could less safely attack Wetherell now than before. He would seem to be implicated in the fellow's malfeasance. He would only advertise to his creditors that his vaunted contracts were worthless. Business men will endure much to escape such publication of their wrongs.

Bayard kept his head high till he reached his own office. Then he fell into his chair and propped his elbows on his desk and gripped his hot brows in his hands as if he were holding his skull together. It is the business man's

attitude of prayer. He was trying to rally his courage by appealing to the vague deity of circumstances, confessing his financial sins and promising a pure commercial life henceforth if he were saved but this once more.

It was thus that Daphne found him when she opened the door narrowly and closed it behind her as softly as La Tosca. She was beaming with affection and importance, and when at her mischievous "Ahem!" Bayard looked up she was so pretty that he forgot himself long enough to smile and rush forward to embrace her.

"What brings you way down here?" he laughed, leading her caressingly to a chair.

"I don't know any other place to find you," she said. "You're never home."

"That's so," he sighed. "How's Clay? Seen him lately?"

"Er—no—not very."

"He's out West somewhere, I think—been gone some time."

"Er—yes."

She was wondering how to state her errand when the telephone rang. It startled Bayard strangely. He caught it to his lips as a toper lifts a glass. He pressed the receiver to his ear and evidently recognized the voice that said "Hello" from somewhere.

He answered in monosyllables of the least importance, but Daphne heard gloom in them.

"Hello!—Oh yes!—No.—Yes, I know.—Yes. I know. —It's too bad—I can't help it—that's part of the day's work.—Of course.—All right."

That sigh of "all right" was the most eloquent statemeant of all wrong that Daphne could imagine. It set her heart to beating with pity for him and with alarm for herself.

Bayard hung up the receiver, pushed the telephone away as a bitter cup, and laughed sheepishly.

"Great convenience, the telephone! Just learned that I've dropped more money than I ever hoped to have. 'For want of a nail the shoe was lost.' Oh well, it saves me from spending it foolishly. But if I'd had five thousand dollars— My God! if I'd had five thousand dollars. Do you know anybody who can lend a rising young capitalist the price of a shave? You haven't got that thousand I gave you, or any part of it, have you? It would do me a heap of good just now. I could make a killing with it—or a life-saving."

Daphne slumped. "No, honey, I haven't got it. I— I've spent it!"

He shook his head over her. "All you pretty little women are hell on money, honey, aren't you?"

"I guess so."

She wanted to justify herself out of the class he referred to by telling him how she had invested his gift. But she could not boast of that without confessing that her investment was gone where his had gone unless he could help her. Plainly he could not do that. So she resolved to spare him further regrets. She would call again on a luckier day. She could think of nothing more helpful to say than a casual, "How's Leila?"

"Don't ask me!" Bayard smiled. "Tell me."

"I haven't seen her for days and days."

"Then you don't dance, I judge."

"I haven't been dancing for a long while."

"Then you wouldn't see Leila. Well, what can I do for you, honey, before I go to take some nasty medicine from the president?"

"Nothing, dear. I had to come down-town on an errand, so I thought I'd run in and say 'hello.'"

"Well, hello!"

"And now that I've said it, good-by."

"Good-by, honey. You're mighty pretty. Hear anything from home?"

"Not since the last letter from mother that I sent down to your apartment. Get it?"

"I think so. Yes. I believe so. Well, good-by."

He kissed her and patted her back with doleful tenderness and she went out of his office into the elevator. Its iron-barred door and its clanking chains gave it a congenial prison feeling, and the bottomless pit it dropped into seemed even more appropriate.

CHAPTER LXXI

DAPHNE wanted to run away from her thoughts and she walked for a mile or two up the deep ravine of Broadway. She dared not go back to Mrs. Chivvis just yet with her bad news. She walked till her body grew hungry in spite of her disgusted soul. She bought herself an expensive luncheon at a strange down-town restaurant full of business men and apparent stenographers.

Still she could not bring herself to face Mrs. Chivvis. She trudged along till she came to a stratum of wholesale houses and jobbers in women's wear. She spied in their windows and ventured into one or two in search of ideas. She found none that were worth stealing. She asked a few prices and discovered how she could save some money. But she had to get it to save it.

She thought of asking Clay for a loan. She swept the appalling idea from her brain with a puff of derision. Besides, he was out of town, Bayard had said. She thought of asking Tom Duane for it. She tried to blow that idea from her mind, but it kept drifting back like a bit of stubborn thistle-down. She could not outwalk it. She kept thinking that if she yielded to weak scruples it would be disloyal to Mrs. Chivvis, to Mrs. Romilly, to Bayard, to herself, to her thousand dollars, her future, even to her darling little child of a shop.

At length she grew so desperate that she stopped at a telephone-booth and brazenly called up Duane's number. He chanced to be at home. When he heard her voice he cried:

"Oh Lord, it's good to hear you. Sing again, sing again, nightingale!"

"I'm no nightingale. I'm a business woman, offering you an investment."

"Hush!" he roared.

"I won't hush. You've got to listen."

"Well, ain't I listenin'?"

She told him the whole story. The name of Mrs. Romilly made him whistle. "Old Gorgon Zola," he called her, and added, "You're a made woman."

"But the clothes aren't made, and I can't make 'em till I get some money. Would you—could you advance me a little on the most excellent security?"

"Haven't I already offered you all I've got on the worst security in the world—marriage?"

"This is business. If you insist on anything else, it's all off. Anyway, think of all I've saved you by not marrying you."

"You've saved me from heaven and kept me in—All right, Central, I won't say it."

"Good-by. I'm sorry to have troubled you."

"Wait, wait! I'll surrender. Your voice alone is worth a thousand dollars a note. How much do you want? Where shall I bring it?"

"Mail two—er—five hundred dollars to the shop, will you? And I can never thank you enough."

"Hush. It's me that thanks you. Don't you want more?"

"No, thanks."

"It will be there in the early mail and I may call round later to put a mortgage or something on the place."

"Good-by," she chuckled, and hung up the receiver. She was crying softly as she stole from the blessed booth, and she looked less like a successful business woman than ever.

She swept along Broadway in lyrical humor till she

remembered Mrs. Chivvis. She stopped again to telephone her and to say that she was too tired to come to the shop. She said she was going to call it a day's work and go home to make Caruso sing to her from the victrola where she had him caged.

She took a taxicab home. As she paid the man and tipped him well she noted that a big English car was standing at the curb.

Something made her think of Wetherell. She remembered her dread of him, and Bayard's bitter allusions to Leila's neglect. She felt that she ought to do something for that home of her brother's. But what could she do?

She stopped off at Bayard's floor and rang the bell. Leila's new butler admitted her with pomp. Daphne walked past him into the drawing-room. Leila and Wetherell were standing there in heavy coats. They seemed to be rather close together. They seemed to be a little shocked at seeing Daphne. She was horribly hurt at seeing them, but she chirruped:

"Just come in?"

"Just going out," Leila answered, kissing Daphne nervously.

"Where?" Daphne asked, with intrepidity, as she shook hands with Wetherell—a prize-fighter's preliminary handshake it was.

"Oh—er—just motoring about a bit."

"Thanks—I'd love it," Daphne dared to say, almost as much amazed as they were at hearing her accept the invitation that had not been given.

Leila tried to escape: "We were thinking of going down on Long Island for dinner. Bayard is not coming home, he telephoned. So I thought—we thought—"

"Fine!" said Daphne. "I need a breath of air and a good jouncing."

"We've only got the runabout, you know," said Wetherell.

"Three can sit in that front seat easily," said Daphne. "Leila and I are both slim."

She was quite shameless from their point of view, but she felt that it would be unpardonable to let her brother's wife go unrebuked or at least unaided and unchaperoned on a cruise so perilous to reputation if not to character.

Heroism and duty are never more difficult than when they require meddling with some one's else affairs, particularly with affairs-in-law.

But Daphne went along.

Leila wanted to slap her over, but she dared not protest. Leila was in the ugly craven mood of a soul fooling with temptation. She had committed no material breach of the trust that Bayard was expected to place in her beyond the loathsome flippancy in honor that consents even to a light flirtation.

When Wetherell had tried to embrace her she had dodged away from him. When he had tried to kiss her she had boxed his ears fairly well. When he had spoken too fervently she had told him that he insulted her. But she had continued to meet him.

Part of his charm for her was that he kept telling her how she helped him. He loved to discuss his plans with her, and as these were superb they were interesting. He told her his risks, and they were dramatic to her because they were enhanced by the danger of lawless possibility in their relations to each other.

Bayard had usually made the husbandly stupid mistake of telling Leila only so much of his business as was necessary to curb her extravagance and quench her dreams. Latterly he had told her nothing. Besides, a husband's business affairs are as trite and daily as bread-and-butter and fried eggs; anybody's else business is caviar or anchovies.

The long rides Leila and Wetherell had taken together had been devoted mainly to serious talks. They even discussed poetry. He remembered some of his Etonian

Latin. She loved to hear him chant Virgil to the roll of the car. She had not the faintest idea of his correctness or his meaning, but she loved his sonority.

To-day Wetherell had come for her with a heavy burden of confession. He wanted to tell Leila of his disgrace. He felt no sense of evil in what he had done. He was as indignant at his superiors as they at him. But he wanted to tell Leila everything. He felt that she would sympathize with him. He had grown to depend on her. There might be public scandal. He wanted to get his version before her first.

And now her little cat of a sister-in-law had to break in. Yet he dared not tell Daphne how unwelcome she was. She plainly realized it. She must be suspicious. To forbid her to come along would assure her suspicions. The only way to delude her was to take her with them and show her how circumspect they were.

So Daphne went along. They hated her and she hated herself for her cantankerous anachronism.

While she was at the miserable business she decided to make a good job of it. When they went down to the car she squeezed in between Leila and Wetherell. Leila blanched with jealousy and cold rage. Daphne completed the atrocity by murmuring to the giant she had to snuggle against:

"It's kind of Leila to come along and chaperon us, isn't it? It makes everything so proper for us two unattacheds."

Wetherell laughed, metallically, "Er—yes—quite so."

There was no further speech in the car till they had crossed Fifty-ninth Street and its aerial continuation on the mighty Queensborough Bridge and the shabby miles that led on into the more gracious portions of Long Island.

CHAPTER LXXII

THEY dined at Long Beach and watched the dancers, in sullen mood. Wetherell ordered much champagne and would not listen to Leila's pleas that he let it alone. He frightened her a little by his reckless mood, and Daphne began to dread the journey home in the dark with champagned hands on the steering-wheel.

She wished she had minded her own business. She began to feel that she was to be punished for her nasty altruism.

She invited Wetherell to dance with her to get him away from the table for a while. He held her gingerly enough, for he was afraid of Leila's jealous black eyes, or perhaps he was like the favorite hero of his native land, Launcelot.

After Daphne and he had executed a funeral dance Leila was emboldened to step out with him. They talked very earnestly and he seemed to horrify her by what he said to her. Daphne could not imagine what it was. Bayard had not told her of Wetherell's downfall from power.

Wetherell confessed his disgrace to Leila in the dance. This sent her thoughts into vortices of bewilderment. It would have been different if he could have told her when they were alone in romantic environment with the tragedy made poetical.

Daphne had turned the poetry into the most satirical prose. Leila saw that Daphne suspected her, despised her enough to try to protect her. Leila now was a married woman caught in an intrigue by her sister-in-law.

In this cynical aspect there was no romance, only disgust. And most disgusting of all was her lover's confession that he was capable of financial embarrassment and was culpable in the eyes of his own country. She was in intrigue with a martyr and not of Nathan Hale's company, but of Benedict Arnold's stripe.

Leila was sickened with the sordid outcome of her romance. She had played with fire and got soot on her hands. She quit the dance and asked to be taken home.

Wetherell felt that she had turned against him and he reached for the last of the wine to fling it down his throat. Leila grimly took it from his fingers and emptied it in the ice-bucket.

"Chauffeurs and champagne are a bad combination," she laughed, but there was a sneer on her lips.

"Oh, very well!" Wetherell sneered in turn. He paid for the dinner and tipped the waiter with the lavishness of a bankrupt. He tipped lavishly the man who guarded his car, and swung out into the road with an instant speed that would have been prettier if there had been less danger.

There was a crowd of automobiles for the first mile and Wetherell was alternately hilarious and truculent in his loud comments on the drivers who detained his impatient soul. At the first important turn he whirled the car to the east instead of obeying the sign that pointed to New York.

Both Daphne and Leila told him of his error, but he roared:

"The longest was round is the homest way short— I mean— I do' know what I mean—but you do. Nice ni' for li'l' spin."

Daphne and Leila were ashamed to be with him and afraid to be with him. Wisdom told them to make him stop and let them out, even at the cost of walking home. But that wisdom is never heeded. People stick to risky things with a tenacity denied to worthier objects.



WETHERELL cried: "Low bridge! Duck p
to each other, and stared into the blinding h



ads. ev'body. Whoopee!" Daphne and Leila clung
ht of a locomotive.

The every-day dangers are regarded with contempt. Millions of ordinary men and women in Europe were undergoing bombardment as if it were sunshine. Millions in America were accepting gratuitous perils without any higher motive than the unwillingness to make a fuss.

The roads were full of motors shooting through hazards with a nonchalance that would have seemed incredible if it were not universal. People with no other religious instinct revealed an implicit trust in God at every corner they darted round in bland ignorance of what was on the other side of it. Miracles of escape were almost infinitely numerous.

But they were not all evitable, and hideous deaths by motor accident furnished the chief material of the Monday morning papers because on Sundays thousands whose offices kept them in their offices were enabled to make a Brocken Sabbath of the once peaceful country roads.

The surgeons and physicians had conquered yellow fever and smallpox only to have the exits kept crowded by the twentieth-century plague of motoritis. Timid women who feared to wet their feet lest they catch cold accepted invitations to be fired along the highways as from cannon.

Daphne and Leila were good sports, but they were not merry. Wetherell furnished all the merriment, and his was from wine and despair. It was the wine that brought out the truth. He had to tell Daphne what he had told Leila, of his misfortune with his bally old government.

He asked Daphne to explain to Bayard how sorry he was that he was involved in the crash.

"Your broth' Bayard's aw'fly nice fel', Miss Skip. He's got nicest li'l' wife in worl'. Perf'ly good li'l' girl. Straight as a string—straight as they make 'em. No nonsense about li'l' Leil'. I just love her—perf'ly hon-or'ble love. I'd do anything in worl' for Leil'—or li'l' Miss Daffy—or ol' broth' Bay'd. Tell him 'at, will you, like a goo' li'l' girl? Tell Bay' 'at, will-ll?"

"Watch out!" Daphne cried. "There's a railroad crossing! Look—a train's coming. Stop!"

"Stop for nothin'. No li'l' Long Isl'n' train goin' stop this li'l' car o' mine!"

"But the gates are down. In Heaven's name, stop!"

Daphne was afraid to put out her hand to the wheel, and she did not know how to shut off the power. The madman at the brakes nudged her with his elbow and hooted the horn at the speeding train which shrieked back a warning. The gateman ran forward waving his flag and yelling. It was too late to stop.

Wetherell cried: "Low bridge! Duck pretty heads, ev'body. Whoopee!"

They smote the long arms of the barrier with a splitting sound like a sudden lightning. There was a rain of splinters, a crackle of glass, a pounding of clubs, and they were through.

Then they crossed the tracks, bumping and jouncing. Daphne and Leila clung to each other, and stared into the blinding headlight of the locomotive, heard the clangor of its bell and the scream of the brakes. They did not know whether they were alive or dead. Then the opposite barrier confronted them, bent, cracked, split, splintered, pounded, and the smooth road was under them again.

The train shot on its way with its gleaming windows and its bell wailing in diminuendo. Cool darkness resumed possession and their hearts beat in an anguish of relief.

Now Leila cried, raucously, "Stop this car this minute, you fool, you beast! and let us out."

"Don't you worr', li'l' girl. Nothin' harm us. I won't let anythin' harm you. Remember this car bears a sharmed life. Fear not, pilot, you carry Sheesar!"

Leila was scared beyond dignity. She wept and longed for Bayard. She feared to face such risk in com-

pany with this outlaw against her duty and all the duties of the world.

"I want to go home," she moaned, and, turning into Daphne's arms, sobbed on her shoulder.

Daphne grew furious. She felt now that she had justified her presence here. She held Leila fast in her embrace and commanded Wetherell. "Slow down at once! Do you hear? Slow down this car!"

Wetherell laughed: "Bless li'l' heart. I'm goin' take you home. You're quite shafe with me—quite. Man that's born to be hanged never drown or get automokilled—that's good word—automokilled—eh, what?"

Daphne could think of nothing to do. The car sped so swiftly that it would be certain death to try to leap out. It was useless to call for help to the cars that flared past like flaming projectiles invisible behind their own radiances.

For a mile or two they ran through dreaming scenery in which they were the only unpeaceful thing. Wetherell grew quieter now, but very sad. He was weeping softly, mumbling over his disgrace, and repenting his life, promising that after this he would run straight and be honest and poor. He was afraid he could never go back to his country, and he kept sighing, "England, my England!" Then the thought of his treason, or the appearance and accusation of it, infuriated him and he sent his own fury into the car.

They whipped round a somber jut in the road, and his search-light painted instantly in white outlines against the black world a wagon-load of sleepy children returning from some village church affair. They were singing, drowsily, "Merrilee we ro-la-long-ro-la-long."

Daphne and Leila seemed to die at once.

Wetherell groaned, "Oh, my God, the li'l' chil'ren!"

He sounded his horn, set his brakes. The startled driver turned to see and drew the horses right across the road.

There was nothing for Wetherell to do but what he did. He spun his wheel and drove his thunderbolt into an open concrete culvert. There was a furious racket. The car turned a somersault and crumpled in a shuddering mass.

Wetherell, pinioned under the wheel, was knocked this way and that and his beautiful head cracked on the concrete like a china doll's.

Leila was snatched from the car as if invisible hands had caught her exquisite body for a lash to flog a telephone pole with, then threw her into a ditch. Daphne was flung and battered and thrust under the car when it turned over. And then the gasoline spilled from the shattered tank and caught fire.

CHAPTER LXXIII

MAN is a machine that weeps, and hurts, and is afraid; regrets, repents, and is held liable for wrong. Its inventor taught it to repair itself somewhat, then thrust upon it agony—agony so various and dire that a mere respite is called joy.

The man machine learned to make other machines to serve ambition or pleasure or laziness. In the ditch lay one of the most ingenious of these, broken, crumpled, aflame. Perhaps—who knows?—that motor also suffered somehow, since it, too, was a complex fabric, a thing of life undergoing disintegration.

Underneath it lay the relics of Wetherell, who would suffer no more here. Close by was Daphne Kip, whom a brief unconsciousness gave a short furlough from torture. She was not alive enough to be afraid of the long, lean flames about the gasoline-tank, though they kept springing at her like wolf-hounds held in a weakening leash. They had not yet quite reached her, but they missed her less and less.

A small distance off, Leila lay still, in almost her first ungraceful attitude, oblivious for a few moments of the outrages the blind forces of momentum had wreaked on her with the fury of a Bill Sikes trying to beat a woman to death.

Of the four, the motor alone seemed to live. Daphne, Leila, and Wetherell were equally still, all alike, except that life would never come back into Wetherell's veins with its regurgitation of anguish and dismay.

It is a part of the new ethics which the automobile has enforced, that the driver of a car must sacrifice his own

passengers rather than any wayfarers he may encounter. Wetherell had done his duty according to the canons of his day. He had hurled two young women of his acquaintance into the very jaws of death rather than take the lives of a cargo of strangers' children unexpectedly met in the highway. Whatever his career had been, Wetherell had earned at least the epitaph of Polonius: "They say he made a good end."

The driver of the wagonful of children had disobeyed the law by carrying no red lantern; and he had violated all reason by turning his horses right across the road. He held them there still to confront two other motors thundering in from the west. He seemed to be doing his best to get the children killed.

The first new-come chauffeur ran his car into the ditch. The second whirled his car sidewise and skidded softly against the wagon. Into the eyes of the infuriated autodrivers the teamster stared down, answering their loud wrath by gaping silently and jerking his thumb over his shoulder.

The rural horses, no more terrified and no less intelligent than their driver, shivered and pranced among the noisy engines, not daring to bolt in any direction. The children rolled out, or were spilled out, of the wagon, and ran now to the safety of a stone wall, and there they sat, with all eyes sparkling, in a row, a young audience fascinated by a glittering spectacle—a spectacle of increasing frequence along the roads of the world.

The chauffeurs and passengers of these cars and of others that drew up in two lengthening queues ran to the scene of Wetherell's disaster. Theirs was the Samaritan task of this century.

At first they could not see Wetherell, but they saw Daphne and her peril, and they set frantically to work to drag her free. But she was so caught that they could not release her until they should remove the car. They pulled and heaved, but it was jammed into the culvert

and the ditch so tight that they could not budge it, though they took risk enough and suffered blistered hands and charred clothes.

At last a chauffeur fastened a chain to the rear axle of Wetherell's car and to the front axle of his, and, by alternate backing and swerving, dragged and hoisted Wetherell's car upward and rearward while other men snatched Daphne from beneath and away from the flames just as they were nibbling at her skirts.

At the same time they disclosed the body of Wetherell and with huge difficulty fetched it forth. Still others found Leila in a heap, a toy with broken joints.

The last thing Daphne had known was the sensation of being shaken to death, a helpless mouse in a terrier's mouth. The next she knew was that she was seated on the edge of a ditch and leaning against the shoulder of a kneeling woman in evening dress.

A bright light from somewhere, a sort of calcium light, illumined the woman's down-looking face, her throat and breast and one bare arm. Afterward Daphne had a dim memory, perhaps untrue, that the woman sighed, "You poor little hurt lamb!" and touched her cheek with soft lips. The tenderness achieved what horror had not: it made Daphne weep.

A number of shadowy men and women wavered against the searing glare of the gasoline.

Daphne sat erect as if waking in bed from a nightmare, but the visions did not disappear, and pains swarmed through her. She was not in her bedroom, but somewhere on a Long Island road, begrimed and bruised and exposed to the eyes of strangers.

She wanted to ask what had become of Leila and of Wetherell. She was afraid to. She tried to look about. She thought she saw men bending to lift a body from the ground, but the group around her shifted and cut off her view.

The business of a knot of people at one side caught her attention. She wondered what they were up to, until she heard a sudden outcry in Leila's voice, a wild outcry of protest and appeal, moans of "Don't! Oh, don't!" and "Oh, my God! Oh, my God!" trailing off into a mere gibber of prayer. Leila was coming back to life.

Daphne knew that her own pain was less than Leila's. She was well enough now to hurt with pity. She thought of Bayard and of the origin of this tragic picnic. She remembered that her own meddlesomeness had brought her here, perhaps had brought about the whole disaster.

She had forced herself on Leila and Wetherell to protect her brother's wife from folly. Her motives had been high, her self-sacrifice all the more pure from its tactlessness.

And this was the outcome of it! Leila was dying, perhaps; Wetherell was probably dead; she herself maybe mortally injured, and all their woes the property of a crowd.

Her ideas were jumbled as badly as her senses. She did not know that the woman who was kind to her and beautiful was abroad on a wicked errand which she accomplished unscathed. Daphne knew only that she herself had been punished for trying to do right and she was sorry that she had tried. The world was a horrible place and she hoped that she would soon leave it.

Then a man leaned down and lifted her with an awkwardness that wakened new pangs. Yet it was good to be held so.

She felt a child in her father's arms again. She wished she were a child once more, without knowledge of life. The man who held her and staggered across the ditch with her seemed young and handsome. But any one would look good in that office.

She never knew who the man was. If he learned from the next day's newspapers who she was, he made no effort to continue the acquaintance. That was the whole duty of a gentleman.

She never knew in whose car she made that swift journey over the smooth road that was so rough to her bruised flesh. Another car took Leila.

They arrived at last at a hospital. Daphne was lifted out and delivered into the possession of two curt young internes. She was stretched on a litter, carried feet foremost into an elevator, down a corridor to a room, and rolled out on a bed. Two nurses proceeded to undress her and bathe her. Then an older doctor came in and examined her injuries. She blazed with shame, one complete blush; but to him she was hardly more than a car brought to a garage. He nodded cheerfully and said:

"Not a bone broken, young lady, and no internal derangements that I can discover. A few burns, that's all, and a big shock."

"Is Leila hurt much?" Daphne mumbled.

"Don't you worry about her," the doctor answered.

"Tell me!" Daphne insisted, with wrath. "Tell me the truth!"

Her anxiety threatened more damage than the truth, so he told her a little of it.

"She is hurt a trifle worse than you. But she'll come round all right."

"I don't believe you!" said Daphne, and sighed, "Poor Bayard!"

"Who is Bayard?"

"My brother—her husband."

"Ah, the young man who was— The other young man was not your husband, then?"

Daphne shook her head. "He is no relation—a friend. How is he?"

"He's quite all right," the doctor answered, with conviction.

Daphne had a ghastly intuition of his meaning, but she was still swirling with daze, and she could just hear the doctor murmuring from far away:

"Perhaps we'd better notify Bayard. What's his last name? Has he a telephone?"

Daphne muttered his name and number. Then her head was lifted, a capsule placed in her mouth, and a glass of water held to her lips. When she was restored to her pillow a sedative was within her to subdue the riot of her thoughts.

She kept sighing: "Poor Bayard! Poor Leila! Poor everybody!" But she was afraid to say, "Poor Wetherell!" She wondered if he had a mother and father and if anybody would notify them. Perhaps they had been glad that he had avoided the battle-fields in Europe; they had felt that he was safe in America. As if anybody were safe anywhere!

The thought of Wetherell's parents reminded her that she had parents of her own; and so had Leila. She dreaded the thought of their misery when they learned of the accident. And there would be the added regret that the accident had befallen a rather suspicious outing of the sort known as a joy-ride. To be killed in a motor-car spinning across Long Island at that hour was not quite nice.

Daphne remembered that she had been warned. She had had an earlier escape from being killed the night when Tom Duane's car collided with the anonymous racer on the road along the Hudson. She had narrowly grazed both death and a scandal. It was through that accident that she met Wetherell and brought him back into Leila's ken. Daphne was to blame for it all. If she had been wise enough to take a lesson from that escape she would not have come on this second fatal excursion. But nobody seemed ever to learn anything from anything.

She fell to thinking of Duane and of the incredible everyday insanity that leads otherwise intelligent people to set out in machines of tremendous engine and to shuttle from peril to peril with drunken speed.

She wondered what Duane would think of her now. She remembered the money she had asked him to lend her. It would be in the morning's mail. But she would not be there to open it. Mrs. Chivvis might not dare to.

All her acquaintance began to march past Daphne's brain in review:

Mrs. Chivvis! She would simply pass away when she learned of Daphne's latest escapade. She would probably refuse to keep partnership with such a reprobate. She would lock her door against her.

And Mrs. Romilly! She would withdraw her order when she read the papers.

And Clay Wimburn! What wouldn't he think of her? He knew her too well, her passionate nature. He had thought her unwomanly in her determination to keep her independence. Now he would suspect the worst and be glad that she had refused to be his wife.

Thoughts and half-thoughts and whimsies danced through her mind in a carnival of stupor and frenzy, while to the eyes of the nurses she lay still and slept.

In another room Leila was shrieking and fighting, whimpering and moaning, a torn gazelle under the claws and fangs of tigerish pain. Abruptly there came a lethal silence also from her. They had succeeded in drugging her at last.

And now the fatigue of the experience and the exhaustion of all emotion left the two bodies like closed shops on Sunday. Daphne and Leila were, as we say, asleep. That was good. That was the zero of repose between plus-pain and minus-pain.

CHAPTER LXXIV

WHEN Daphne had left Bayard in the afternoon she had found that he was depressed, but not how deeply. She supposed that his money loss was only a failure of expected profits, or the mishap of an investment. She did not dream that he was crippled financially. She missed the opportunity of blessing him from the wells of love for him that filled the deeps of her heart.

In those times people were glutted with disasters; their perceptions of misery were dulled. What conscious effort they made was toward escape from knowing too much about misery. Only a picturesque catastrophe could seize the attention. They skimmed the brutal headlines and turned to the comic pages where blessed ministers of diversion played the clown to keep the habit of cheerfulness and the habit of courage alive in a world of travail.

So Daphne in a gloom over her own financial riddle had made less than her characteristic response to Bayard's implied appeal. She had gone her ways, dreaming no more of the sorrow she left behind than of the sorrow she was hastening toward.

The collapse of Bayard's hopes affected other people no more than other people's collapses had troubled him when he was prospering. Fortunes had been made and lost in the munition stocks so rapidly that people grew indifferent. The stocks themselves were flippantly referred to as "war babies," and when Bayard left his office and bought an evening paper the epitaph of his venture was the ribald head-line "Wall Street Spanks Another War Baby." That was all it meant to the re-

porters. With equal callousness they would refer next day to Wetherell's disaster as "Another Joy Ride Meets Fatal Finish."

Bayard was so forlorn, so profoundly ashamed of his bad guesswork, that he could not bear to show his face at any of his clubs that night. He had boasted there too often of having bought heavily of the stock. He had persuaded too many of his friends to invest in it.

So he went where busy men go when other places are closed to them. He went home. He forgot having telephoned that he would not be there for dinner. When he reached his apartment he found that Leila had given the servants a night out.

Leila had left no word of her own plans. After a forlorn delay Bayard called for Daphne. She was gone, too, with no word of her return. Bayard sighed and went to a neighboring restaurant for dinner. He felt all the wretchedness of a bachelor. He returned to the apartment and watched the clock with an increasing anxiety, made up chiefly of jealousy and suspicion.

At last the telephone rang. A man's voice spoke and explained that it spoke from the hospital.

"Is Mr. Kip there? Is this Mr. Kip? Mr. Bayard Kip? Your wife is here, and your sister, and your friend Wetherell—automobile accident—out here on Long Island —pretty bad smash. Your wife's not very well—better come out—as soon as you can."

The world reeled. Bayard seized his hat, played a tattoo on the elevator-bell, suddenly remembered that he had given his last cash to the waiter at the restaurant, stopped to ask the night man for a loan, snatched from him a cherished ten-dollar bill, darted into the street, yelled at a taxicab with ferocity, got in, ordered the driver to "go like hell." He kept putting his head out to howl at him.

The old cab creaked and hustled and threatened to shake itself to flinders. The Queensborough Bridge seemed

as long as the arch between earth and heaven. Bayard's mind threatened to shake itself to pieces, too. It kept jolting from thought to thought. "Leila hurt! My darling hurt! But she was with Wetherell—the dog! I hope he's dead— But Daphne was with them. So it must have been all right. Poor Daphne—poor little sister! Poor little wife! But Wetherell— But Daphne— But what if Leila should be guilty— But what if she should die— But what if—what if—if—"

When at last they drew up at the hospital entrance the driver, as usual, had no change. Bayard must wait till it was made by the hospital cashier. He cursed his improvidence and swore again that he would never fail to keep a reserve. Even in small money he had no resources.

At length he was ready to be led to his wife's room. He questioned the interne fiercely about Leila and Daphne, and had evasive answers. He did not ask about Wetherell, but the interne volunteered the news that he was dead.

That made the ultimate difference. Bayard stopped short in awe, his forehead cold as if a clammy hand had been laid on it. Death was at work. Where would he stop?

In the chill white aisle of the corridor his frenzy gave place to a sense of bitter cold. A chill white nurse led him past doors and doors to a room where in a white bed lay a chill white thing, a cylinder of cotton.

Leila's face was almost invisible in bandages; her whole body crisscrossed and swaddled. She was an Egyptian princess mummied. For a moment her soul came out of the drug at his gasp of pity. It ran about inside its cocoon trying to find a nerve to pull or a muscle to signal to him outside. The mere lifting of her hand brought from her a moan of such woe as canceled all Bayard's grievances against her.

It is small wonder that man should believe in a divine hell, seeing how the people he himself damns are absolved

by a proof of torture as atonement. Even Wetherell had gained forgiveness by merely dying.

If Leila had come through the escapade beautiful and unscathed Bayard could have hated her. But who could help loving the poor writhing thing she was now?

Once Bayard's resentments and jealousies were swept from his mind, his old love came back throbbing and leaping. His very soul bled and he dropped to his knees, his arm thrown across that bundle of wreckage which had been his choice among the world's beauties.

This was Bayard's third marriage to Leila: for every couple has at least four ceremonies to go through with before the two are completely married. The first is the triumph of amour, the trial by fire, the ordeal of rapture. The second is the initiation into the money problem, the financial mating, the moneymoon. The third is the experience of anguish, when either watches other through great pain or illness or disgrace—the wormwood moon. To the fourth marriage rite the Kips had not yet been summoned, for since their marriage death had not robbed either of them of any one near or dear.

But now Bayard and Leila were wed in the third degree. He loved his bride as never before. Seeing her danger and her helplessness and realizing what terrors must have shaken her soul and what pangs her body, his heart enlarged and accepted so much emotion that there was a kind of rapture in the very power to ache so well, to endure so huge a charge of sympathy.

He was soon dragged from his communion with his once-more unconscious bride by the young doctor, who lifted him up with the unpractised diplomacy of internes and led him aside, grumbling: "Say, what you trying to do? Kill her? She's weak and her heart's fluttering. Cheer her up if you can. If you can't, you can't stay. Better not stay, anyway."

Bayard apologized cravenly and promised better behavior, and was permitted to steal back to Leila. He

took her one undamaged hand; it was as beautiful as the severed hand of a Greek statue, and as marblish white and cold. Holding it fast in his warm palms, he secretly sent his fingers groping for Leila's pulse. It was hard to find, and so feeble, found, that he could hardly count it. It was so rapid, too, that it seemed her heart must race itself to death. And yet it was a stumbling pulse; it made uncanny pauses, then raced again. It reminded him somehow of a frightened woman running along an unknown road in the dark, pausing for breath and a backward look at some pursuer, and fearing equally what she fled toward and what she fled from.

At every check Bayard wondered if the pulse would ever begin again. And indeed it was a matter of doubt.

The interne knew hardly more than enough to keep Bayard from perturbing Leila with his own distress. He led him at length out into the corridor. And now Bayard remembered that he had also a sister, an only sister, in this same tavern of pain. His heart went out to her. He remembered, too, that they had a father and a mother to tell or deceive.

The interne assured him that Daphne's injuries were slight. She looked sad enough when he peered in at her, though she was far from the dreary estate of Leila. She was asleep, but she woke at the sound of his step, and, turning her head with effort, opened her eyes and smiled at him feebly and whispered his name, and beckoned to him with one weak finger.

He ran to her and embraced her and kissed her brow and was mightily glad that she had a brow to kiss and eyes to look into. His Leila was only a great parcel with one hand.

"You poor little lamb!" he mumbled.

It startled Daphne. That was what the strange woman had said who upheld her after the accident. Man and woman, stranger and brother, had both felt the same thrill of pity. It was very wonderful to be felt sorry for. She

remembered a line of James Whitcomb Riley's, "And oh, I wanted so to be felt sorry for!"

And now she cried some more, quite luxuriously. She wept very well for so feeble a thing. She realized that for a long time she had been needing pity more than anything else. In her dash for freedom, her impatient gestures against the shackles of her sex, her grit and her stubbornness had provoked admiration or hostility, but nobody had felt sorry for her. And young women need a little pity now and then. She had a sudden, sharp longing to be felt sorry for by Clay Wimburn. She wanted his arms around her again. She wished she had not opposed him so impatiently. She wished she had felt sorrier for him. He must have suffered a lot. All of a sudden it came over her what a lot he must have suffered from loving her with such poor success.

Men need much pity, too, though they make an affectation of getting along without it. Daphne, thinking of Clay, opened her eyes to see in Bayard's face the look he had worn when he was a child and had cried as hard as girls cry. Now he had the wet eyes of a wounded stag. His throat was struggling with rough pebbles of grief. His chin was twitching. He also was mutely begging to be felt sorry for.

Daphne's heart ached out to him; she hugged him as hard as her weak arms would let her. She searched her mind for comfort. She could think of nothing so comforting just now as a hearty, reassuring lie. She whispered:

"It's all my fault, honey. You see, Mr. Wetherell was taking me out for a ride. I met Leila. She told me you telephoned you weren't coming home for dinner. She looked so lonely that I asked her to come along and chaperon us. I'm to blame for it all. Can you ever forgive me?"

He was so grateful, so eager to be deceived, that he forgot her state and clenched her hand hard and kissed it in gratitude for a priceless boon. The nurse, returning, saw

the deed and smiled, not knowing what joy Bayard was taking in absolving Leila of suspicion and loading himself with blame. At such a time we love to bow our own heads in shame and cast ashes upon our hair. The taste of ashes in the mouth is good at such a time.

If Bayard's intelligence made any effort to remind him how specious Daphne's story was, he silenced it. For such moods intelligence is indecent.

Daphne, seeing how welcome her falsehood was, and fearing to spoil its perfection, pretended to go back to sleep. And by and by her brother pretended that he must not disturb her.

He went again to Leila's room and lifted her hand and kissed it. She was so befogged with drugs that she did not know, though he held it for hours and hours and hours —the long night hours of a hospital.

At intervals Leila's pain reconquered the drugs. The hand began to jump and wriggle as if it were a separate being. Her moans came from far away, then nearer and more alarming. The nurse would break off her whispered gossip down the hall and make haste to submerge Leila again with opiates, or at times with the hypodermic needle, which Bayard winced to see, and turned away from, but which Leila put her hand out for. That frightened him.

Now and then in her conscious whiles Leila would make sorrowful little whimpering appeals, mewing like a cold kitten left out on a door-step. At length Bayard could realize that she was calling to somebody. He bent close, fearing that it might be Wetherell, or even her mother or her father.

Finally he made out that she was calling for him. She was wailing: "Bydie! Bydie! Bydie!" He could not find her soul to tell it that he would not fail her, but she had found his with the divine comfort that she had not failed him in this test. She wanted him and no one else in the world.

That redeemed their wedlock and proved its complete-

ness. All these latter estrangements were mere lovers' quarrels, household flurries. Serene in this reunion, he fell asleep in his chair, his little finger hooked in hers.

They were very close and very far apart—their linked hands as frail a bond and seemingly as long as a telephone wire between cities. Leila was, herself, a little city which an earthquake had visited and wrecked. While her soul apparently slept, the multitudinous citizens of her self were busy amid débris, the Lilliputians were delving each into his own house and shop. Throughout the broken walls of her body there were twisted wires and choked streets and flaming temples and an innumerable population doing its best to save the town, but desperately needing help from without, such help as Chicago had and San Francisco and Messina and Belgium, Poland, and Servia.

Bayard was not capable of rendering help to her except by way of financing the skill of others. This he would do to the last of his powers, regretful only because there was no superhuman skill to purchase. That business man's soul of his was dreaming even in his sleep of schemes for raising money to meet these new demands of Leila's. Fortunately sickness and such need as hers were always acceptable as security and collateral for a loan. He would get money enough somehow if only the doctors would somehow bring help enough.

He was not permitted to sleep there long, for, being well, he was an alien in the hospital, and in the morning the wards were humming with baths and breakfasts and changes of dressings and inspections. The shop was opening for business.

In the surgery the knives were boiling, and the priests and priestesses were cleansing themselves for the altars. The wheeled cots were running along the halls to the elevators with their white freight of sick terror.

At length the chief surgeon came dreadfully into Leila's room and shook hands with Bayard and put him out. By and by the surgeon reappeared to tell Bayard that

in his opinion certain operations were immediately necessary to save Leila's life and her health and her mechanism. He asked Bayard's consent formally.

It was required of this husband to send his beloved to the knives, to take that awful responsibility of adding wounds to her wounds, of increasing her surfeit of agonies.

But for the love of her he gave his authority. The surgeon was chary of promises. He was not sure what he would find, but he thought he ought to do all that could be done artificially in behalf of broken bones, torn ligaments, lacerated flesh, displaced organs, and whatever else might be found amiss. His excuse was the physician's motto: "We must do the best we know how."

Bayard was permitted to hold that one poor hand of Leila's in the journey down the corridors to the anesthetizing-room. She was too feeble to realize or be more afraid than she was. It was Bayard that sickened at the vision of the anesthetist, and the surgeon in his robe and gloves, and the nurses and assistants with the gauze over their mouths.

Bayard was driven away from the sacred precincts. He could not go to Daphne's room, for her nurse was bathing her and dressing her bruises and the blistered surfaces along her right calf and shin where the gasoline flames had begun to sear.

Bayard was forlorn enough, alone, roomless, in the way of everybody, waiting for the release of his wife from the torture-chamber. He went outside and smoked, but he was afraid to be away against Leila's return.

He found a morning paper on the floor of the waiting-room near a chair. He hated to read some one's else discarded paper, but he had a man's impatience to get the news early, so he picked it up surreptitiously.

The war in Europe furnished no picturesque horror that morning; the political situation and the Mexican riddle were quiet enough to admit a social document to the front page. Bayard read:

THE THIRTEENTH COMMANDMENT

ANOTHER JOY RIDE MEETS FATAL FINISH

MUNITIONS-AGENT WETHERELL KILLED.
MRS. BAYARD KIP INJURED
PERHAPS FATALLY.
SISTER BADLY HURT

A broken steering-gear that cracked under the strain of seventy miles an hour brought a sudden end to the hilarity of a trio of merrymakers and added one more to the big death roll of the year.

Only the quick work and presence of mind of a teamster, Henry Drinn, in turning his wagon aside saved a party of children from being slaughtered by the reckless driver.

After the car thundered past, Drinn saw it suddenly swerve into a culvert. He supposes that the steering-gear broke—

Bayard blenched with shame at the sight of his wife's name in the head-lines. He wanted to murder the reporters who invaded the sacred privacy of his home. He cursed the ruthlessness of the press.

He did not know how much of the chronicle was truth, how much reporter's romance. If history is only "fiction agreed upon," what is journalism?—fiction disagreed upon? For no two papers tell the same story alike. It is not altogether their fault, since human beings can neither understand nor report one another.

None of the papers credited Wetherell with the sublimity of his self-sacrifice. How could they know of it? Daphne alone had guessed what Wetherell's motive was, but she was in no state to be quizzed. The stupid Drinn won the credit and did not refuse it; began in time to believe it his and boast of it.

All that Bayard knew or cared was that his wife and his sister were on the front page of the New York dailies. There are various ways of getting there, most of them unpleasant. This way was odious.

Bayard's jealous wrath began to ferment again. Then he saw Leila being trundled back on a barrow. He thought at first that she was dead, for the ether still possessed her and a cloth had been laid over her face.

Now love flared up again, and again he forgave and adored. He ran to the interne with anxious questions. The interne was careful not to promise anything. The door was shut in Bayard's face and he resumed the hospital patrol.

At length he pleaded for admission and was let in—quite in time to miss none of the horrors of the soul's rebirth from the ether-death to the nausea of life.

The surgeon had removed a part of Leila's bandages and she had eyes now to torture Bayard with, eyes that looked up to him out of hell, eyes that glazed and sickened and seemed to scream, then filmed and rolled whitely back and returned to beg for help.

And now there was no comfort in hearing Leila call his name, for he was hatefully useless to her, a bystander that stared at her and offered her no aid. He abominated the ignorance of man and the futile sciences that grope and do not find.

The surgeon came in to see Leila and shake her hand and tell her that she was going to be all right. She might have a little pain—yes, she probably would be inconvenienced (it was his word). But there was no way of stopping that odious vomiting. It would soon be ended, however. Well, good-by!

Bayard spent the most of the day watching Leila suffer and repeating his little rote of sympathy over and over.

That night he was permitted to occupy a room in the hospital.

CHAPTER LXXV

DAPHNE'S first visitor after Bayard was Mrs. Chivvis. She was not at all what Daphne feared. Her manner had the discretion that sick people require, but her heart was evidently shaken from its calm. And she brought flowers.

"Oh, my dear!" she murmured. "I read in the papers about your misfortune. Such a night as I had spent! I was so afraid for you! I couldn't imagine what had become of you. There was no one at your brother's apartment all night. The night man said your brother had left in great haste and seemed to be worried. And to think that you were lying here in such pain! And I might have helped you."

Daphne smiled, and they clasped hands like the two splendid little business women they were.

"How's the shop?" Daphne asked.

"I haven't been there."

"It isn't open, then?"

"No, indeed. With you here?"

"That makes no difference," Daphne stormed, already converted to the shop religion. "Customers must not find the door shut. Run open it at once. Suppose Mrs. Romilly dropped in. We'd lose her—unless this notoriety drives her away." A little blush of shame flickered in Daphne's pale cheeks a moment and went out. She sighed: "I suppose Mr. Duane has stopped that check, too—if he ever sent it. Oh, dear! I'll never try to save anybody's else reputation."

"What do you mean?" Mrs. Chivvis snapped.

"Nothing," Daphne answered in haste. "I'm woozy with the medicines." She had suddenly realized that her sacrifice for Leila's sake was of the kind that publication would reverse into slander.

Mrs. Chivvis had an inkling of what she meant, but she had also decency enough to try to change the subject. She made several fishlike gasps, but no words came.

Then a nurse knocked; brought in a card growing in a large little azalea-tree. Daphne scanned it. "Mr. Thomas Varick Duane!" She peered closer at the pencilings and read aloud: "'I just learned. I'm heartbroken. Isn't there anything I can do?'"

Daphne felt as if outraged society had forgiven her. "Isn't he a darling?" she murmured.

Mrs. Chivvis begrudged a stingy, "Well, of course—" She had the poor folks' conscientious scruples against wasting praise on the rich. She thought she could escape from committing herself by rising. "You'll want to see him, I presume."

This was a tremendous concession, since it would be almost pagan for her to retire and permit Daphne to receive Tom Duane in her room, and she in bed. Mrs. Chivvis had never heard of the old French court custom. She would not have approved of it.

But Daphne had had enough of evil appearance. She expressed the horror that Mrs. Chivvis felt: "See him here? Never!" She glared at poor Mrs. Chivvis with a reproof that was excruciating to accept, and ordered her to go down and meet Mr. Duane and incidentally learn about the check. "Business is business," she said.

Mrs. Chivvis descended in all the confusion of a Puritan wife meeting a Cavalier beau. She came back later to say that Mr. Duane was really very nice, and spoke beautifully and had sent the check and would send another if Daphne wished it, and would make old Mrs. Romilly go on with the order, and would she like some special fruits or soups or something? He was really

very nice. She was blushing from the very effort to keep from blushing.

Daphne eyed her with ironic horror and said, "You've been flirting with him! and me so helpless here!"

"Daph!—nee!! Kip!!!" Mrs. Chivvis screamed. The only counter-thrust she could think of was, "And what does Mr. Wimburn say?"

This sobered Daphne. She had been thinking of Clay, and during Mrs. Chivvis' absence she had been regretting that once more Clay should have permitted Tom Duane to beat him to the proper thing.

There was an incongruity in Duane's flowers that hurt her. Why had Clay sent no word? Everybody else in town had seen the papers. Clay read the papers. Surely he was not capable of such monstrous pique. When your worst enemy gets badly hurt you've just got to forgive—if you're human.

Duane had not been held back by any such jealousy of Wetherell. Why should Clay? To conceal her misery from Mrs. Chivvis she began to complain again of the risk of leaving the shop shut, and she bustled her partner off. Then she became mere woman and brooded over her lover's incredible neglect. She continued to brood all that day, and the next, and the next.

Gradually her gloom changed to a lively alarm. Perhaps some ill had befallen him. The factories where war munitions were being turned out were subject to all sorts of explosions, incendiarisms, strikes, assaults, murders. There was much talk of hostile spies and hyphenated-American conspiracy, and she began to wonder if Clay might not have been assassinated as an agent for the Allies.

Almost worse than this fear was the dread that he might have been won over by some other woman. Even in that case, Daphne felt that he ought to have sent a word of regret—unless the woman were some green-eyed demon "who had him scared."

Daphne had an abundance of time to speculate, for if Clay were alive he gave no sign of his existence.

When she appealed to Bayard he said that he had tried to find Clay himself. He confessed that he had wanted to borrow money of him.

The hospital had asked for two weeks' room rent in advance, and he had found himself a little short. Daphne fretted over this eternal stringency. Bayard's efforts to persuade her that she must not worry about money only made her worry the more.

She grew frantic to be back at her shop. To be earning something, that was the important thing. She hated to lie abed and let Mrs. Chivvis carry the business alone. It was unfair to Mrs. Chivvis and unfair to the business, too, for Mrs. Chivvis was no saleswoman, and Daphne was a mighty good one, if she did say it herself.

She had come to think of "the business" with a fervor akin to religion or patriotism.

She was evolving a commercial character with a vengeance. The soul that had looked down on trade was now thrilling to its distresses and ecstasies, its romance and its prides and its pathos.

Yet it was rather her wares that she had changed than her character. Previously her stock in trade had been like other women's—her charm and her attention and her compliance; now she was selling clothes and trinkets.

We are all salespeople in one branch or another: aristocrats with show-windows full of pedigrees and favors and antique furniture of every sort; artists marketing their dreams and handiwork; military men their labor and their safety; clergymen their voices and dogmas. Even wives and sweethearts were always price-tagging more or less of themselves for more or less of some man's cash or credit.

Daphne felt that she was honester now than she had ever been. She was actually less in trade than ever, because she was now vending less precious things. By

means of commercialism she was protecting her soul and body from the auction-block. It is better to sell the things you make than to sell the things you are.

Daphne was afraid, however, that Clay was not emancipated enough to appreciate this. She was afraid that she had bought her shop at the price of her love. The hospital was a jail now; she was withheld from pursuing both her new business of selling bridewear and the original woman business of becoming a bride.

CHAPTER LXXVI

IT was a Kip habit to conceal misfortunes from "the family" as long as possible. When Daphne and Bayard were away at school they had never let their parents know of their illnesses till they were over. And Mrs. Kip alluded to her own or their father's ailments only in the past tense.

So Bayard and Daphne had agreed that no mention of this disaster should be made to the old folks at home. But the accident which had gained a front-page position in the New York papers caught too many Cleveland eyes, and Wesley Kip and his wife learned the news from people who called them up to ask the news.

Wesley sent an excited telegram which Bayard answered in the most reassuring terms, which convinced his parents so much that on the second forenoon they walked into the hospital.

When a nurse brought up their names Daphne and Bayard were stunned. They could not refuse to receive their parents. One can hardly do that. In fact, now that they were at hand, Daphne grew homesick for them. She longed for that motherly bosom-haven and for that look in her father's eyes, for the tame simplicity of the old couple.

In marched two exceedingly well-groomed persons. Prosperity had played havoc with Daphne's homely parents. Wesley's tailor had renovated him entirely and the wife's dressmaker had found magic garments that took years and years from her age. Daphne stared, and felt disowned. Her parents had abandoned themselves and her.



HE also was mutely begging to be felt sorry for. Daph
comforting just now as a hearty, reassuring lie.



rt ached out to him. She could think of nothing so spered: "It's all my fault, honey."

But it would have taken more than a well-cut gown or a smart coat to alter the fact that these were her very own people who had come hundreds of miles to see their poor child.

Wesley and his wife were amazed by Daphne's agility as she sprang about the bed. They had rather expected to find her hopelessly incapacitated. They had come with heartfuls of sympathy to squander. Mrs. Kip had counted on having Daphne back to nurse. She was almost disappointed.

But Leila required all their excess of tenderness. She frightened them with her deficit of health and beauty. None the less, Wesley, always the gallant in his way, blurted out:

"Well, well, how fine you look, Leila, child. Don't she look fine, mother? Isn't she pirty?"

The elder Mrs. Kip tried to agree that the younger Mrs. Kip made a good appearance, but she was unconvincing.

Leila groaned. "Fine and pretty" was what she wanted to be, and her terror now was not that she might die, but that she might live on unlovely and therefore unlovable. Women incessantly make the mistake of thinking that they hold their husbands' love by their beauty; as if the most beautiful woman had and kept the most lovers—a manifest untruth. At any rate, Leila accepted the fallacy as gospel. The beauty she had flaunted for her own glory and the tantalizing of her husband and other men became now a solemn necessity for the salvation of her home by the retention of her mate. It was no longer a vanity, an adornment for her own prestige: it was a duty to Bayard.

She had an instinct for keeping the house beautiful by keeping the housekeeper beautiful.

Leila was determined to endure everything that might be necessary to regain her beauty. She would go through any ordeal of knives or plaster casts or splints or medicines

for that. She was quite grim about it. Her resolution extended to the spending of as much of Bayard's money as might be necessary on surgeons' fees and doctors' bills. If she bankrupted Bayard it would be with the tenderest motives.

Five times she went to the operating-table, made that infernal journey into ether-land, knowing what after-anguishes waited her, what retching and burning and bleeding. She braved death again and again, took long chances with cowering bravado. And all for Bayard's sake.

The last time, as she throbbed on the live coals of agony, she whispered to Bayard: "Boy, I'm going the limit for you. But this must be the last. If this doesn't succeed, let me die. I'd rather die than be an eyesore to you." And then she grew incoherent and babbled of red flames.

The fight for beauty was her one reason for existence during the next months. She felt a little remorse for her disloyalty to Bayard, but not much. In the first place, it was largely his own fault; he should have spent less of his time at his business and more on her entertainment. Strange that he had left her alone so much when she was at her best, and neglected his business for her so much now that she was ugly and dismal, with only one theme of talk, her multitudinous distresses.

She felt, too, that whatever blame she might have earned for her flirtation with Wetherell had been amply expiated by her punishment—her unmerited punishment for what she had not done. She had not run the car. She had objected to its speed, and demanded that Wetherell stop and let her out.

Then the accident befell, and she was battered almost to death.

So it always goes; we get punished for what we did not do or did not mean to do. And at that one might ask why we should be punished at all, seeing that we do what we do because we are what we are or because our environ-

ments and circumstances are what they are. How can one will to do the right thing when the will itself is lacking?

There are noble souls, indeed, who declare that punishment is unprofitable at best, that it is more criminal than the crimes it punishes. A generation ago man took hell away from God; now he is showing a tendency to take it away from himself as well. He finds that a hell is a poor place to learn genuine repentance. On the gridiron one's heart fills with regret, perhaps, but also with upward hatred and self-pity.

So Leila grew bitter against the wanton destruction of her grace and her health. Her watchword was a resentful "Why? Why this to me? When so many wicked women are going about laughing, why am I here?" When she learned by indirection that Daphne had taken on herself the blame for the excursion, Leila did not contradict her to Bayard. In fact, when Daphne was well enough to be moved into Leila's room for a visit Leila told her:

"The robe of martyr is so becoming to you, Daphne, that I'm going to let you wear it."

This did not increase Daphne's respect for Leila, but it did increase her pity; and there grew up between the sisters-in-law an affection that gradually effaced the hyphen. At that day the very word "hyphen" had assumed a national importance.

Daphne drove Bayard from the hospital to his office. She could see that he was jading with the drain on his sympathetic faculties and growing morbid over the neglect of his crippled business. He had been heaping up doctors' bills and letting his work go.

And now once more he was slaving at his job, trying to outrun Leila's extravagance. Her dressmakers were doctors now; their toil the remodeling of her frame to the current fashion of two legs and two arms of normal design and action. She was trying to garb herself in a new robe of silken skin of the modish color—white, with a cast of pink.

Wesley and his wife did not make a long visit. After the first bliss of reclaiming their children they lost them again. Bayard was at his office all the time. Daphne was restless for her shop. And Wesley could not keep his mind off his own factory. He was more afraid now of the prospects of peace in Europe than he had been aghast at the price of war. For when peace was declared his contracts would cease.

The war had made a profound revolution in such gentle souls as his. All America, indeed, was in a curious mood of horror at the slaughter and dread of its cessation.

But the dread was ill-founded. Somewhere the mutual enemies of Europe found always new men to shovel into the furnace. Each victory of the Germans and Austrians increased the determination of the Allies.

Wesley went back to Cleveland and took his wife along the day after Daphne went back to her shop. Leila alone remained in the hospital, visited daily by Daphne and Bayard.

One morning when Bayard reached his office after a harrowing all-night vigil at Leila's side he was just falling asleep over the first mail when his telephone snarled. He reached for it with alarm. A voice boomed in his ear:

"Ah you thah?"

"Yes."

"Keep the line, please. Now, you ah through, sir?"

Then a growl replaced the boom, a growl that made the receiver rattle:

"Ah you thah, Mr. Kip? This is Colonel Marchmont. I dare say you remember our conversation about those damned contracts with Wetherell. A little farther discussion might not be amiss—if you could make it perfectly convenient to drop ovah at, say, a quawtah pahst fah?—Good! I shall expect you at that ah."

Bayard pondered. What new persecution was fate preparing? What new rod was in pickle for his welted back? The only thing he could think of was a threat of im-

prisonment. He did not see how he was liable, but ill luck will find the way.

Later, as he went to the office, he bought an evening paper. A heavily headed cablegram announced that the laborers in the British munition-works were striking or threatening to strike. The fighting aristocracy raged at the treachery of the factory soldiers; but the laborers insisted that the makers of weapons were growing rich from the fat contracts with the government and that the laborers had a right to a look-in at least.

A gleam of understanding came into Bayard's eye. He winked solemnly at nobody in particular, unless it were at his frowning fate. When he reached the desk of Colonel Marchmont he looked unabashed into the revolver muzzle of the old war-horse's one eye.

Without any preliminary courtesies or any softening of his previous tone the colonel snorted: "Those devilish contracts you made with Wetherell— The poor fellow is no longer alive—more's the pity, but— Well, I'm afraid I was a bit severe with you. I fancy you've rather let yourself in for a rather heavy bill of costs and all that. Now we have no desire to impose any hardship on you. Of course Wetherell was a confounded scoundrel, and we can't begin to pay the prices he fixed. But we might see our way to renewing those contracts at a reasonable figure—say at a twenty-five-per-cent. reduction from the terms you quoted."

Bayard smiled and shook his head. He bluffed the bluffer. "The prices we quoted included only a fair profit, Colonel. Since then materials have been going up in price every minute, owing to the demand from abroad. And the home market is booming. Railroad stocks are rising again. Railroads are in the market for new equipment. The building trades are busy. The steel-mills are running nights again. New blast-furnaces are being blown in as fast as the men can be hired back. We can sell all our product here, and more, too, than we can make."

Colonel Marchmont squirmed, but he was a soldier and loved a good counter-attack. He smiled as he squirmed. He pooh-poohed and baw-hawed only a moment or two before he laid down his arms. Wetherell was avenged when his successor signed new contracts at a higher price than he had made. The changing times changed everything; yesterday's exorbitance was to-day's bargain.

Bayard departed with a wallet full of business. He got back to his office on feet fledged with Mercurial wings. His feet were beautiful on the rug of the president's office. The whole office sniffed the breeze of prosperity revivifying the torpid air.

Bayard felt so kindly to all the world that he hurried to the hospital to scatter good news like flowers over Leila's couch. She was in that humor when anybody's else good fortune was an added grief to her.

"I'm no use to you now," she wailed. "I never was much. But at least I dressed and kept looking fit. And you said I was pretty. But now— Oh, Bayard, Bayard! You used to call me beautiful, and I tried to be beautiful for you. But now— Oh, dear, oh dear! It's awfully lonely, being a cripple. Daphne is away all day. She's the happy one. She works. If only I could work a little and help you. I'm only a drag on your nerves and your poor strength. And I do so want to help you. I'll never be pretty again, but if I could only find some work to do I wouldn't be so useless. To be ugly and useless both —it's too much!"

Wise pathfinders say that when you are wandering in strange country you should turn every now and then and look back at the way you came. It wears a different aspect entirely from its look as you approached, and you will need to know how it will look when you return.

People who have lived turn and look back and see their lives in retrospect. Sometimes they shout to those who are coming up along the same path, warning them of treacherous spots and misleading paths. But the wind

carries their voices away or renders them unintelligible. That thin voice which distance blurs or distorts is known as advice, and the fates that made it the easiest of all things to shout, keep it the hardest of all to hear.

From childhood on, Leila had been warned against extravagance—as Bayard had, as have we all. But only now that she was looking backward could she realize the wisdom, the intolerable truth, of the adage, "Waste not, want not."

Meanwhile Daphne was having so different a history that she felt ashamed. It seemed unfair to her to get well quickly and with no blemish except a scar or two that would not show, while Leila hung between death and deformity.

But seeing Bayard alone and hearing Leila fret, she felt confirmed in her belief that she had done the wholesome thing when she joined the laboring classes. There were discouragements without cease, yet Daphne was learning what a remedy for how many troubles there is in work. It seemed to be almost panacea. It was exciting, fatiguing, alarming, but it was objective. She was not fretting over soul states and social statuses and love torments and temptations. She was struggling to make the bravest show on the least expense, using her mind instead of her heart, studying the conditions of the market and not the whims of her conscience as it alternately reproached and approved the same moods.

She was on her way at last to that fifty thousand a year she had dreamed of. She was uncertain yet of earning a thousand a year, but she was on the road.

In Hawthorne's day the poverty-stricken tenant of the House of the Seven Gables had nothing to do but devote one little room to the sale of cheap sweets, for, as he said in 1841, a "petty shop was a woman's only resource." In 1915 there was no limit to woman's opportunity.

Now came Daphne and thousands like her assailing the

bazars of the world, selecting their trades and professions, exploiting their wiles and fascinations in the marketplace, and trying to wheedle their moneys from the public instead of their immediate men. Thus their sex became more sacred, a flame for the altars of romance whether of virtue or of sin, but at least not so necessary a device for money-changing.

Daphne went back to the shop ahead of the doctor's permission. She was weak at first, and fluttery, but the atmosphere of trade was more tonic than that of any health resort. She had neither time nor strength to think of love or lovers during the busy day. But all her evenings were as dull as a business man's in a strange town on Sunday. She had no family, no club, and she did not play billiards.

CHAPTER LXXVII

CLAY WIMBURN, like the shrewd business man he was, finding that his big gold-mine had faulted, had gone prospecting for a new lode. He wandered from city to city. The factories everywhere were busy, most of them at munitions of one sort or another: the cutlery works were making bayonets and trench mattocks; the motor factories were making flying-machines, war trucks, and ambulances; the cotton-mills, bandages and uniforms and pajamas.

Labor was scarce and high; manufacturers were hasty and curt. Nobody had time to listen to him or needed his aid. He had worked his way beyond Chicago and was westering when he saw from the train what he had not seen for months, a large factory plant closed up, abandoned. It had somehow been overlooked by the munitions-makers. Clay dropped off the train and began to investigate.

The owner had died heartbroken by the hard times. He had died intestate, leaving a squad of quarreling heirs and a tangle of debts.

Clay studied the situation and fled back to Cleveland. He found among his acquaintances there a man or two for whom he had made big money. He borrowed largely on usurious terms, with no security but his own word and his past performances. He returned to the village where by pretended indifference and a careless display of large cash he wrought the heirs to a frenzy of impatience and a miracle of agreement. This took time and a show of public calm which belied his frantic Marathons about his hotel room.

Out there in that village he did not see the New York papers or any other record of Daphne's accident. She was out of the hospital before he closed the deal and emerged as the owner of a furnace tract of fifteen acres and a slag bank of sixteen. He got them for one hundred and forty thousand dollars. While he was at it he picked up an adjoining farm for five thousand dollars. As soon as the deeds were recorded he sped to Pittsburg and quickly disposed of his holdings to the owners of a chain of pig-iron works for two hundred and seventy thousand dollars. He dashed back to Illinois to record these new deeds. Then he returned to New York with a hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars clear profit, all his own. He swaggered into Bayard's office to tell him the news.

"Five thou. a day is not so worse pay for a young feller, huh? Neat little problem in math. Capital nothing, profit one twenty-five thou. What is the percentage? About twice infinity, eh? How much can I lend you? Speak quick because the government is trying to borry it offen me."

A week before and Bayard would have hailed him as a guardian angel from on high. Now he looked up and laughed:

"Don't bother me. I'm too busy to talk to little pikers."

He told his own story. They both roared grandiosely and were proud to know each other. Those were great days for daring young men. Napoleons were to be had by the dozen.

The twin pets of fortune slapped each other's shoulders and crowed like the boys they were.

Actually Clay had called on Bayard less to brag than to learn about Daphne. He came at his business by a conspicuously careless roundabout.

"By the way," he said, "I saw your father and mother in Cleveland. They were drifting down Euclid Avenue in a palace car and floating very high."

"Yes," said Bayard. "They were on here for a few days."

"Is that so? And how's—er—how's the rest of the family?"

"Oh, she's very well, but Leila's still in the hospital."

"In the hospital? Good Lord! What's the matter? Appendicitis?"

"Automobile wreck."

"You don't say. Were you hurt?"

"No. I—I—" He was too busy to explain the hateful affair, so he said, "No, I wasn't hurt."

"It's nothing serious—about Leila, is it? Was she badly injured?"

"Pretty badly. But she's coming round."

"Lord, I hope so! And—you say Daphne's well?"

"Well, and busy."

"Busy? What at?"

"Oh, a crazy scheme of hers. She's keeping a little store."

"Daphne keeping a store? Great Scott! What next?"

"Heaven only knows."

"Where is—where is the damned store?"

Bayard gave him the address, and Clay wasted no time asking further questions. He made haste to the subway, fuming; left the train at the Grand Central station and climbed up to a taxicab.

He stopped it a block below Daphne's number. He wanted to reconnoiter. He paid the chauffeur and advanced with caution. There was a little crowd of people ahead of him. He edged through it and beheld a sight that made him gape with incredulity.

One sees strange things in New York, but Clay found this unimaginable and impossible.

There, in the New York street, was Daphne, standing on a step-ladder and waving a monkey-wrench at a man in overalls.

CHAPTER LXXVIII

WHILE Clay stared pop-eyed and oh-mouthed the laborer fell back and Daphne began to apply the monkey-wrench to a signboard hanging from an iron bracket.

An explanation occurred to Clay. In his college days, after the college fashion, he had stolen a few tradesmen's signs for the decoration of his room. He had heard of college girls doing the same thing. That must be what Daphne was up to. But in broad daylight and in New York!

Now a man somewhat overdressed gave an order to the perplexed man in overalls and the man in overalls advanced again, pleading:

"Please, Mees Keep, don't you done it."

Daphne answered: "I will! It's mine! Go away!"

The overdressed man, with a sneer, pushed the laborer back and set his hand on the ladder, saying: "Come on, now! Down you come or I'll take you down."

Daphne promptly set one of her French heels crunchingly on his fingers. He drew his hand away and nursed it a moment under his other arm. The laughter of the increasing crowd nettled him. He stepped forward again and wrapped his arm about Daphne's knees. He was about to carry her off on his shoulder as a Sabine prize.

Daphne gasped and let the monkey-wrench fall and gave a little cry of horror at his touch.

Now Clay felt the need of action. It was just the situation where in romantic drama the hero draws his sword and cries in blank verse: "Hold, caitiff vile, touch

but the snowy hem of yonder maiden's robe with hand of thine and I'll requite thy poison with my glave. I'll split thee e'en from sconce to chine"—this last for comic relief.

But Clay's vocabulary was wretchedly unworthy of the occasion. He bunted aside a neighbor and darted forward, growling: "Here! What you think you're trying to do?"

The other man set Daphne back on the ladder and, turning, answered, with equal impoetry, "None of your d—smpff!"

The closing expression was the result of Clay's divinely guided right fist smashing him on the nose and mouth.

The blow sent its victim staggering backward clear across the walk into a lamp-post, whence he rebounded against the envious left fist of Clay, who had followed fast enough to whip it into his mid-waistcoat.

The fellow was big and no coward, but his brain was first jolted by the unexpected blow, then by the lamp-post's attack from the rear, then by the disheartening stomach punch. But most of all he was upset by the loss of his hat. There is much importance in a hat.

Men occasionally threaten to fight, yet rarely come to blows. But they are incessantly having their hats blown off; hence, incessantly clutching at them. The first impulse of the muscles of this man was, therefore, to clutch for his hat; the first impulse of his eyes was to follow it into the gutter.

It was a new Knox, and it had mud on it now. Also his nose had blood on it. A man with a new suit and a nose-bleed is busy enough without other distractions.

The physiological psychological hat reaction was responsible for the man's disgrace and also for his protection. It worked both ways. Clay had thrown himself forward with such violence that he had left his own hat behind in the air. His muscles played him the same trick, and before he knew it he found himself stooping and groping backward

about the sidewalk while he kept his eye on the similarly ridiculous figure of his adversary.

The men in the crowd were exulting in the prospect of a free bout. A few women were deliciously hoping that they were going to faint.

But street fights may be guaranteed to disappoint. The spectators had already had all they were going to get of this one and more than they usually got. They had seen two blows artistically planted. What followed was dull.

Clay's victim found his hat, and while he rubbed it across his elbow advanced on his crouching assailant and spoke through the handkerchief at his nose:

"Say, who are you, anyway? What right you got horning in here, anyhow?"

Clay answered, "That's my business—and Miss Kip's." He rose and stood a little taller than he was and frogged his chest wider than it was.

Seeing that Clay knew Daphne's name and was not merely a foreigner violating the laws of neutrality, and seeing also that Clay was hungry for more calisthenics and about to begin a new assault, the stranger found a convenient loophole of escape. He made a magnanimous surrender:

"Well, if the little lady wants the sign she can have it. But you wait till I get a fair chance at you, you—you—Well, I can't say it in the presence of ladies."

"Go on! Say it!" Clay demanded, working the knuckles of his fists.

The crowd grew cheerful again, and Daphne on her ladder suffered the raptures of a cave-girl seeing her original captor smite a new persecutor with a stone ax. But the festival was ruined by the abrupt intervention of a policeman, the tardy but inevitable killjoy. He came in growling his usual *leit-motiv:*

"Here, here. Wassa matter here?"

In the face of this intervention the mutual enemies assumed a look of brotherly love and confronted their common peril with a duet:

"Nothing! What's the matter with you?"

Strange idioms of colloquial life! Just to ask a man about his ailments—to ask an unanswerable question with no interest in the answer—is accepted as a challenge and a repartee.

To Clay's disgust, his quondam foeman made a glib explanation:

"This gentleman bumped into me by accident and knocked off my lid, and he was just apologizing."

The policeman laughed sophisticatedly out of one side of his mouth, and spat aside with majesty. He complimented the ready speaker:

"You're right there with the cute come-back, ain't you? Well, brush by or I'll take a swipe at your lid meself."

"This is my store. I'm the agent for it."

The officer turned to Clay. "You git a move on, then, or—"

Clay retorted, "This is Miss Kip's store, and I'm her fiancé."

The officer turned, descried the gracious outlines of Daphne—who made no denial of Clay's words—smiled at her with the eye of a connoisseur, and, turning to the crowd, roared, "Beat it, you lobsters, or I'll run yous all in." Then he moved on himself, laughing.

Clay and his anonymous adversary looked at each other and laughed.

"Shake!" said the adversary.

Their hands shot out and they shook. It is a national habit. The adversary nodded to the man in overalls and said, "She can have it." He lifted his slightly stained derby and said, "Help yourself, Miss Kip," winked at Clay, and took himself out of the scene.

Daphne came down the ladder with knees ashiver and put out her hand. Clay put out his, and they also shook. The overalls went up the ladder while Clay said to Daphne:

"And now what in the name of Heaven is it all about?"

CHAPTER LXXIX

"COME inside," said Daphne. She led him into a little shop empty of everything but the débris of removal.

"Where are we?" said Clay.

"This was my shop."

"What's the matter? Busted already?" Clay asked, with a not unflattering cheerfulness.

"Not in the least," Daphne explained. "We've expanded so fast we had to move. Got in some big orders. Put three sewing-girls to work in a room up-stairs. Had a call from a nosy building-inspector. He said we were now a factory and had to have fire-walls and fire-escapes and all sorts of things. We'd outgrown this little hole-in-the-wall, anyway. So we sublet and moved across the street.

"When we came to take the sign with us, that smarty-cat of a real-estate agent that you hit such a lovely poke said we couldn't take it.

"I said I would so!

"He said it was nailed on and according to the law it had to be left.

"I said, 'I don't care. I didn't write the law or agree to it.' I told the moving-van man to take it. He chased him away. So I just got a step-ladder and started to take it down myself. It was painted especially for us by an artist friend of Mrs. Chivvis' and I didn't propose to leave it.

"Heaven knows what would have happened, though, if you hadn't come along like an angel. Wasn't the

creature hateful? Why didn't you send me word? You must have heard of my terrible accident. Didn't you? You weren't mad, were you? Anyway, you're looking mighty well, aren't you? And I'll have to forgive you, won't I?"

Clay's one comprehensive answer to the jumble of questions was an eloquent, "Whew!"

Now he recognized Mrs. Chivvis, who had stood wringing her hands over Daphne's boldness and her helplessness and her equally terrifying rescue.

"You remember Mrs. Chivvis, don't you?" said Daphne. "Mrs. Chivvis, you haven't forgotten Mr. Wimburn. He's kept away so long you might have, though. Where've you been, Clay? But wait—you can tell me on the way over to the new shop."

She led him to the sidewalk. The janitor had just brought down the signboard. He gave it to Daphne with awkward gallantry and she handed it over to Clay and marched across the street, stopping impetuous taxicabs with a wave of her hand.

Clay followed like a messenger-boy. She had him not only carrying bundles again, but actually carrying an advertisement of her business! And he had forbidden her to go into business!

Now that he was rich again, it was intolerable that she should have any business but his. Still he toted her lumber for her, looking down at its legend with a wry grimace. He was infuriated at the picture of the underclothed woman, and the lettering: "Boudoirwear. Exquisite things for brides. Miss Kip. Mrs. Chivvis."

His wife-to-be flaunting her maiden name on a signboard! It was humiliating to degradation.

When she led him into her new emporium the graceful fabrics displayed were all red rags to him. He was a bull in a crimson shop.

Daphne made Clay sit down and asked him if it were not all perfectly lovely. He waited until Mrs. Chivvis –

went on to the work-room. He had a glimpse of a number of girls and women on sewing bent. They were laughing and chattering.

He answered, "It's perfectly loathsome."

Instead of resenting this insult Daphne laughed till she fell against the counter. The worst of it was that her eyes were so tender.

"Where did you get all the capital for all this stock?" Clay demanded, with sudden suspicion.

"Oh, part of it we bought on credit and part of it on borrowed money."

"Borrowed from whom?"

"From Mr. Duane."

This was too much of too much. It brought Clay upstanding. "There was just one thing," he growled, "that spoiled my fun to-day when I punched that fellow in the snoot, and that was—"

"That it wasn't Tom Duane's snoot," Daphne finished for him, with a chuckle of amiable derision.

"Yes!" Clay stormed. "And I'll get him next."

"Oh no, you won't!"

"Oh yes, I will!"

"I won't have you assaulting the best friend I've got in the world."

He groaned aloud at this, not noticing how she used the word "friend." She ran on. She had not talked to him for so long that she was a perfect chatterbox.

"He lent me five hundred dollars when I didn't know where else to get it. And it nailed our first real contract—a big commission from old Mrs. Romilly. She was crazy about our work and sent us other customers. We paid back Mr. Duane's five hundred and then—" She giggled in advance at what was coming to Clay. "And then I borrowed a thousand from him. We owe him that now."

Clay was as wroth as she had wished, but he recovered handsomely after the first struggle. He took out a little book. "Well, I'll give you a check for that amount—

or more. And you can pay Duane off with interest. I won't have you owing him money."

"You won't have!" Daphne mocked. "You won't have? Since when did you become senior partner here?"

"Senior partner!" Clay railed. "I'm only the fellow that carries your signs across the street. And I'm no partner in this business! I hate this business. It makes me sick to see you in it."

"Then step out on the walk," said Daphne. "You're scaring away customers and using up the time of the firm. The boudoir is no place for you, anyway."

A young woman with a bridal eye walked in and Daphne left Clay to blunder out sheepishly. He did not see that she cast sheep's eyes after him. He was a most bewildered young man. He had made a pile of money and still he was not happy!

CHAPTER LXXX

IN the course of a few wretched days Clay picked up some of the facts about Daphne's presence in Wetherell's fatal car. He was more furious at her than ever and more incapable of hating her.

Her tolerance of Duane, her escapade with Wetherell, her disgusting commercialism, offended him utterly. Yet he could not grow indifferent to her. He could not quite convince himself that she had done anything wrong, or, if she had, he could not help forgiving her for it.

That alternation of relentless faultfinding and plenary indulgence is one of the chief activities of love.

He saw Bayard often, but Bayard knew little and said less. One afternoon he invited Clay to ride with him to the hospital, whence Leila was to graduate. He warned Clay not to betray how shocked he would be at Leila's appearance, which, he said, was a wonderful improvement on what it had been.

She was, indeed, a mere shell, and Clay was not entirely successful with his compliments.

Leila sighed: "Much obliged for your good intentions. I'm a mere sack of bones, but I'm going to get well. The doctors say that if I take care of myself every minute and go to a lot of specialists and go to Bar Harbor in the hot weather and to Palm Beach in the cold and spend about a million dollars I'll be myself some day. That's not much, but it's all I've got to work for. Poor Bydie! He didn't know he was endowing a hospital when he married me."

"What do I care, honey?" Bayard cried, with perfect



The blow sent its victim staggering b



rd clear across the walk into a lamp-post.

chivalry. "The money is rolling in and I'd rather spend it on you than on anybody else."

"The money's rolling out just as fast as it rolls in," Leila sighed. "The Lord seems to provide a new expense for every streak of luck. And that's my middle name—Expense. Tell the chauffeur not to go so fast, dear."

She had actually learned one lesson. That was a hopeful sign. Bayard checked the driver and muttered:

"Yes, we don't want a repetition of the smash-up that Daphne dragged you into with her friend Wetherell."

Clay gave a start. His eyes rolled Leila-ward. Her big eyes flashed into his an appeal for silence. He understood and kept the secret, but he was so irate that he dared not trust himself in that galley another moment. He looked at his watch and remembered an imaginary business engagement.

He dropped out, and, finding a taxicab, gave the driver Daphne's shop number. He wanted to denounce her for taking on her own innocent shoulders the blame for Leila's philandering.

When he reached the shop he found her philandering with Tom Duane. By this time he was ready for punching another nose. It was a pleasant pastime and the appetite was growing on him.

But Mrs. Chivvis was there, and a customer. Clay turned on his heel to leave. Then he turned on his heel again, telling himself that he would be damned if he would let Duane freeze him out.

He spoke to Daphne politely; he told Duane that he was glad to see him. There was an icicle on every word.

When Duane offered to wait till Mr. Wimburn had stated his errand Clay said that he would wait till Mr. Duane had finished his. He played dog in the manger and enjoyed it in a morbid fashion. Duane left, finally, in such confusion that he walked through the wrong door and entered the work-room, where a bevy of sewing-girls stared at him with admiration. He turned back and

reached the street without further mishap. Daphne asked him to come again soon.

Then she asked Clay what she could sell him. He said he would wait till the shop closed. She raised her eyebrows impudently and gave him a chair in a corner. He sat there feeling as out of place as a strange man in a harem.

Eventually the last garrulous customer talked herself dumb; the last sewing-woman went. Mrs. Chivvis pulled down the curtains in the show-window and at the door and bade good night reluctantly.

Then Daphne locked the door, dropped wearily into a chair, and sighed, "Well, Clay."

"I want to know why you lied to Bayard about Leila and Wetherell?"

Daphne smiled and shrugged her fascinating little shoulders.

Clay went on: "And I want to know why you don't give up Tom Duane?"

She shrugged her excellent shoulders again, but she did not smile. She spoke instead: "I don't ask you to give up your stenographer."

"Oh, it's like that, eh? Well, then, why won't you let me lend you the money instead of Tom Duane?"

Her answer astounded him with its feminine logic: "I can borrow of Mr. Duane because I don't love him and never did and he knows it. I can't borrow of you because—"

He leaped at the implication: "Because you love me?"

"Because I used to."

"Don't you any more?" he groaned.

"How can I tell? It's been months and months since I saw the Clay Wimburn that came out to Cleveland and lured me on to New York. The only Clay Wimburn I've seen for some time has been a horribly prosperous, domineering snob who is too proud to be seen with a working-woman. He wants to marry a lady. I never

was one and don't want to be one. I'm a business woman and I love it."

"And you wouldn't give up your shop for me?"

"Certainly not."

He looked at her with baffled emotions. She was so delectable and so obstinate, so right-hearted and so wrong-headed. It was intolerable that she should keep a shop. Yet it was rather cozy here in the twilight of the drawn curtains with the traffic outside like a trampling surf and the walls covered with fabrics of a fireside glow. He spoke after a long delay:

"And you really don't love Tom Duane?"

"Not a bit. But I like him mighty much."

"More than you like me?"

"I don't like you at all."

He pondered that. He was tempted to find more sweet than bitter in it. He asked, with some timidity, "May I come and see you once in a while?"

"If you want to."

"Where you living now?"

"Still at the Chivvises'."

"You ought to take better care of yourself than that. Surely you can afford a better home."

"I suppose so, but it would be lonely anywhere else. It has been safe there—since you quit calling on me. It doesn't cost me much."

"But you're making so much money."

"Not so very much—yet. But I'm putting my makings in the savings-bank. I've got quite a little stack—for me. You'd never guess how much. It's nothing to what you've got, of course, but it's all my own and I made every cent of it, and—golly! how I love to watch it grow."

"You miser!"

"Maybe. I guess that's the only way to save money—to make a passion out of it and get a kind of voluptuous feeling from it. But I really think that it's the fun of

making it that interests me most. It certainly keeps me out of mischief and out of loneliness. Those terrible days and nights when I used to sit in my room looking down at busy people and wishing that some man would come and save me from going crazy with idleness—they're all gone.

"I don't have to marry anybody now unless I want to. If I did marry and my husband got sick or went broke I could take care of him. If he died, I shouldn't have to go widowing after some other man to support me. I could even afford a broken heart. Oh, there's no freedom like having a job and a little reserve in the bank. It's the only life, Clay."

"And you wouldn't give up your 'freedom,' as you call it, even for a man you loved? Couldn't you love a man enough to do that?"

"I could love a man too much to do that. For where's the love in a woman's sitting around the house all day and waiting for a man to come home and listen to the gossip of her empty brain? That isn't loving, that's loafing."

Clay was not at all persuaded. "But there's no comfort or home life in marrying a business woman."

"How do you know? You know plenty of unsuccessful wives that are not business women."

"I want a housekeeper, not a shopkeeper."

"Go get one then, I say. If a woman can't earn enough outside to hire a housekeeper, let her do her own housework. But if she can earn enough to hire a hundred housekeepers, why should she stick to the kitchen? I tell you when my husband (if I ever have one) comes home of evenings after the day's work I'll have something else to talk to him about except the history of the kitchen. In my home, if I ever get one, the cook will not be the star. Besides, it enlarges life so. Instead of two living on the wages of one, two will live on the earnings of two. It seems to me it couldn't help being a better and a happier way of living."

Clay blushed vigorously as he mumbled: "What's your

business woman going to do when the—the babies come? Or do you cut out the kiddies?"

Daphne blushed, too. "Well, I should think that the business woman could afford babies better than anybody else. She has to give up the housework, anyway, even when she's a housekeeper. I suppose she could give up her shop for a while. At least she could share the expense—or her husband could stand the bills since he escapes the pain. I tell you, if I ever had a daughter I'd make her learn her own trade if she never learned anything else. I'd never raise her to the hideous, indecent belief that the world owes her a living and she's got a right to squeeze it out of the heart's blood of some hard-working man. No, sirree! It may be old-fashioned, but it isn't decent, and it isn't even romantic. The love of two free souls, with their own careers and their own expenses, seems to me about the best kind of love there could be. Then both of them can come home evenings and their home will be a home, a fresh, sweet meeting-place."

Clay breathed hard. He was silenced, but not convinced—beyond being convinced that Daphne Kip was still the one woman in the world for him, in spite of her cantankerous notions. Still, of course, a woman had to have some flaw or she would not be human. Daphne's foible was as harmless as any one's, perhaps. So he blurted out:

"I suppose you've given up all thought of marrying me?"

She answered him, with a pious earnestness: "I've never given up that thought, Clay. I've been trying to make myself worthy of the happiness it would mean. I have had the trousseau all made, and paid for, for a long while. That's what I came to town for originally—our trousseau. But when I saw how much sacrifice it meant for my poor old father and what a bundle of bills I'd be dumping on my poor young lover, I couldn't see the good of it. So I took my vow that I wouldn't get a trousseau

till I could earn the price of it myself. And now I've earned the price and I've got it. But I've lost my excuse for wearing it.

"Still, I'd probably have lost you, anyway, or ruined you if I had brought you my old ideas. Everybody always says that money is the enemy of love. I wonder if it couldn't be made the friend. It would be an interesting experiment, anyway."

If she were a miser and a business woman the rôle was as becoming to her surely as the more familiar rôle of spend-thrift and graftress. She was so wistful, so dreamy-eyed, so very loveworthy that Clay put out his arms and groaned with a big happiness:

"Daphne honey, let's try the experiment."

She looked at him with a heavenly smile in her eyes, and answered, "Let's."

He moved toward her, but she dodged behind the counter. She studied him a moment, then reached below the counter. A bell rang and a drawer slid out. She took some bills from it, made a memorandum on a slip of paper, and put that in the place of the bills, closed the drawer, and leaned across the counter, murmuring:

"They say all successful businesses are begun on borrowed money. So I'll borrow this from the firm—for luck."

She put out her hand. Clay put out his. She laid three dollars on his palm and closed his fingers on them.

"What's all this?" he asked, all mystified. She explained.

"A plain gold band, costs about six dollars, and that's for my half of the partnership. Women are wearing their wedding-rings very light nowadays."

"I should say so!" Clay groaned, but with a smile.

She bent forward and he bent forward and their lips met. She was only a saleswoman selling a customer part of a heart for part of a heart, but to Clay the very counter was the golden bar of heaven, and Daphne the Blessed Damozel that leaned on it and made it warm.

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